

THE PAGEANT OF CHINESE HISTORY

BY
ELIZABETH SEEGER

ILLUSTRATED BY
BERNARD WATKINS

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SEEGER
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To

THE DALTON SCHOOL
ITS HEADMISTRESS, ITS STAFF AND ITS PUPILS
THIS BOOK OWES ITS BEING
AND IS
LOVINGLY DEDICATED

PREFACE

TEN YEARS ago I was asked to teach History in a progressive school in New York City. The curriculum that I was concerned with, which covered the five years from the fourth to the eighth grades, was, to my mind, the most right and reasonable one for children to follow. They started their study with the earliest known civilization, that of Egypt; this led naturally to the other ancient empires of the Near East, then to Greece, to Rome and to mediæval and Renaissance Europe. Then they followed the great discoverers to America and spent two years on the history of their own country. It was a continuous, logical story and an excellent preparation for the study of modern history in High School. But there was one great gap in it. The Far East, with those great nations whose vivid and dramatic stories and whose religions and civilizations are such an important part of our world, was entirely left out.

This, of course, was not peculiar to any one school. It is only lately that such a broad curriculum as this that I have mentioned has been available to children. But since we wanted to make it truly comprehensive, and since the headmistress of this particular school had a great love for the East, as I had myself, we decided to include at least a year of Oriental History, in the sixth grade, and to go Eastward, as well as Westward, with the great discoverers.

So I began to look about for books that twelve-year-old children could study. There was an adequate little history of

Japan ; but, although good books may have escaped me, I found nothing, either good or bad, for India and China. We had not time, unfortunately, for more than these three countries. At that time many general histories were being published, stories of the "World," and of "Man" and so forth. Considering their titles I looked hopefully at these ; but alas ! In books of fifty or sixty chapters one or two were devoted to the farther countries of Asia. Books for adult readers were little or no better. General histories of civilization, art, philosophy, literature and so forth, are still being written with no mention of the unsurpassed achievements of the East. What a strange disproportion is this ! After all, it is close to seven hundred years since the Polos made their way to Cambaluc, and more than four hundred since Vasco da Gama sailed to Calicut. How long are we going to look at every aspect of human life with only one eye ?

Besides the practical need of knowing about these great nations that are still so strange to most of us, we can ill afford to lose the intrinsic interest and beauty of their histories. Surely, though perhaps I speak with partiality, there is no history more thrilling and delightful than that of China. I cannot agree with some writers who state that the interest of Chinese history begins with foreign relations, or who give one fifth of the space in their books to China before 1500 A.D. and four fifths to the rest of its history. If it were not for very recent developments I should be more inclined to say that the interest of the history ended with foreign relations. It is the Chou Dynasty, which began in 1122 B.C., with its astonishing visions of social life, its philosophy, its dramatic events and its subtle and humorous anecdotes, that richly repays the student. It is the adventurous and inventive dynasty of Han, the magnificent renaissance of the Tang and the ex-

quisite art of the Sung Dynasties that delight the soul even more than the later history. But all the thousands of years of the nation's growth are a mine of interest and enjoyment which has been only partially opened to us.

To return to our school problem. Finding no books for our use, I was constrained to write a sketch of Chinese history for the children myself, while my friend, Dhan Gopal Mukerji, wrote a similar sketch of the history of India. With these, which were often revised and enlarged, the history of Japan, and a correlative course in Oriental literature and dramatics, the children became as familiar with the history and thought of Asia as they were with those of other continents and loved them as well. The present volume, though it does not pretend to be a text-book, is an amplification and a completion of the sketch begun in school.

No one is better aware of the presumptuousness of the task or of the inadequacy of this book than its writer. The history of China is more like the history of a continent than that of a nation, and its very length demands a rigorous selection of material. I have tried, as far as I am able, to take the Chinese point of view rather than that of Western commentators. Out of a mass of events I have followed those that form a consecutive and simple narrative, and out of a wealth of legend and story I have chosen those that seem to symbolize important aspects of Chinese civilization. Much that is valuable has, of necessity, been omitted; I have stressed certain things, and have touched others very lightly. I trust that other books will soon supply what mine may lack, and that we shall have as many histories of China for children as we have histories of nearer but no more interesting or important lands. I set forth this volume as one might a decoy bird, hoping that it will attract winged and living comrades to its side.

For any fault in book or author I have only two excuses to offer : the immediate need, both for adults and children, to know more about our great Eastern neighbors, and my own deep love and admiration for the splendid history and culture which it has been my joy, as well as my task, to study.

ELIZABETH SEEGER

*November 1933
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NOTE ON THIRD EDITION

Since 1933, when this book was written, a tragic and heroic chapter has been added to the history of China and must be recorded. China has come through one of the cruellest and most devastating wars in history with added honor and prestige.

In 1933 the need for greater knowledge of the Orient was sufficiently clear ; now it is imperative. China and the United States have faced a common enemy ; now, with all the nations of the world, they share the same dangers and the same longing for a lasting peace. The first requirement of that peace is mutual understanding and trust. Americans and Chinese are both peace-loving peoples, but much of our experience and many of our ways are different. We need to know these differences and to appreciate each other not in spite of but because of them.

A knowledge of China's history is very important if we are to understand its people. The events of this troubled century or even those of the last are not sufficient to give us understanding. Only by knowing the sources of China's strength, the profound values of its culture, can we realize how beneficent its influence may be in the building of a united world. The greatness of its past confirms our confidence in its future.

January 1947

E. S.

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KEY

TO THE PRONUNCIATION OF CHINESE WORDS

a = ah, like the *a* in *father*

e = ay, like the *e* in *obey*

i = ee, like the *i* in *police*

o = o, as in *hole*

u = oo, as in *fool*

ai = y, as in *cry*

ao = ow, as in *now*

(Tai is pronounced *tie*)

ei = ay, (Wei is pronounced *way*)

The final e in words like Lao-tze, is hardly pronounced at all. It is like the e in the, or the final e in French, as in je or me.

The consonants are pronounced just as we pronounce them.

THE PAGEANT OF
CHINESE HISTORY



CHAPTER I

MYTHICAL TIMES

WE ARE living at a time when all the nations of the world are being brought together and for the first time are beginning to know each other well. Steamships and airplanes, railways and radio are bringing the very ends of the earth together, and we realize that our world is not so tremendously big as it seemed to be a little while ago. We meet people of other countries at every turn and find, to our surprise, that they are not so very different from ourselves.

The nations are like a big family of brothers who separated a long time ago, going to different parts of the earth, where they found different places and climates and conditions to live and to work in. Each had his own adventures and each has treasures to bring to the others when they meet together. Of course, they have met often enough in the course of history, sometimes by chance and sometimes on purpose, trading with each other, or fighting, or learning from each other, but now it seems that we are going to know each other better than that

and, sooner or later, live and work together, as a family should.

China is an older brother, who was separated for a long, long time from the rest of the family, and who has rich treasures of knowledge and of art and of wisdom to bring to us. We are only now beginning to know China, even a little. Yet it is one of the oldest nations on our earth. Its history began thousands of years ago, and although the other older nations (such as Egypt or Persia or Babylonia) either fell to pieces or were conquered by younger and stronger ones, China has lived through wars and conquests and is still one of the largest and most important countries in the world.

When the Pyramids were being built in the valley of the Nile, China, too, was building up her early kingdom along the Huang-ho, and when Babylonian wise men were studying the stars and measuring the sky, the Chinese were making a calendar and foretelling the eclipses. When the Greeks were setting up their free and vigorous little states in the hilly peninsula that was their home, China had been for over a thousand years a feudal kingdom. There was a wonderful time, about five or six hundred years before Christ, when all over the world wise and holy men taught their people how to live. Buddha lived in India, Zoroaster in Persia, Socrates in Athens, and at the same time in China, Lao-tse and Confucius were living and teaching.

When Rome conquered the shores of the Mediterranean Sea and pushed up into the wilderness of Europe, conquering, too, the barbarians of France and Spain and Britain, the Han Dynasty in China was ruling wisely and well over a vast empire. They heard of each other vaguely, those two great empires, and wealthy Romans wore Chinese silk, which came to them after long and dangerous journeys over deserts and mountain passes and wilderness, passing from one trader to

another until it was finally loaded on the Roman galleys in Syria or Alexandria. Both empires were attacked by hordes of barbarians ; Rome was destroyed but China was not. During the dark ages of confusion in Europe, China was growing steadily, living richly, and making beautiful works of art, for there never were such artists and such craftsmen as the Chinese.

They made such lovely things that when finally the hardy European explorers, Marco Polo and others, actually reached China, it seemed to them a fairyland. The cities and palaces were so magnificent, the government so peaceful and orderly, the art so exquisite, the riches so amazing that no one in Europe could believe that such a wonderful place could exist. They thought Marco Polo a great liar. But they did not forget the stories he told about it ; explorers and discoverers braved the dangers of the journey around Africa and across unknown oceans, in order to find it. It was because of China that Columbus sailed across the Atlantic Ocean on that daring voyage that ended when he found the two continents of America lying across his path.

From the time when the greedy traders of Europe reached them, the Chinese were never left in peace again, though that was all that they desired. They disliked and scorned all foreigners, and were perfectly content with what they had in their own rich land. They were forced to know the rest of the world, however, and now they stand side by side with us and are our neighbors. Since their history has marched along before ours and beside ours for so long and is now mingled with our own, is it not worth knowing ? Let us go back and hear the whole of their story from its beginning:



A LONG, long time ago, thousands of years before Christ, a tribe of men lived on the banks of the Wei River and along the elbow of the Huang-ho, where it turns at right angles and runs eastward to the sea. We do not know where these men came from : perhaps they came in from central Asia, seeking more fertile and kindly country than they could find at that time in the middle of the continent; perhaps they had always lived right there. At all events, they were a strong and active band of men, resolved to make a home for themselves on the luxuriant land that seemed to belong to them. And what a beautiful land it was ! Fertile prairies, watered by great rivers, stretched before them, mountains rose to the south and west and wooded hills surrounded them and sheltered them. Many wild animals and birds shared their home with them, and trees and flowers made it beautiful ; but in the hills and the marshes, wild tribes of strange men hid from them and watched them, or attacked and stole from them. The land had to be worked for and fought for, and this tribe of men, who called themselves the Black-haired People, were good fighters and even better workmen. They were strong and straight of body, with yellowish skins and black eyes and hair, a cheerful people, always ready to laugh and to sing. They were wanderers, hunting for their food, living in shelters made of boughs or in caves hollowed out of the soft yellow soil that covers that part of China.

Most nations, as they look back on their early history, tell stories about certain godlike men who lived among them and taught them how to live. The Egyptians said that Osiris, their divine king and his queen, Isis, taught them how to raise grain, how to marry and to live in homes, how to govern themselves and to live in peace. The Chinese, too, say that there were great men in their early days who led them and civilized them.

These men lived so long ago that their lives are myths and no one can tell how true their stories are. It must have taken hundreds of years to do the things that they were supposed to do, and many men must have thought and labored to bring those things about, but as people look back through the dimness of the past, they remember only the greatest men and give them the thanks that should also be given to many others.

Fu-hi * was the first of the leaders of the Black-haired People. He showed them how to live in families and in groups, and he taught them to tame and to herd sheep, and to fish in the rivers. He taught them to build houses of mud and wood, to marry and to make homes, to bring up their children and to stay together in groups that could help each other and work together. After this they called themselves the Hundred Families (hundred meant a great many, not just one hundred). They say that even then, so long ago, Fu-hi made a sort of picture-writing that could be understood, and that the people made music, with pipes and drums and a stringed instrument. When Fu-hi taught them to fish, he also made a song for the fishermen to sing. Other animals besides sheep were tamed; pigs and dogs and horses became useful companions and wild fowl—cocks and hens, ducks and geese—were caught in the lakes and forests and kept around the houses for food and for their eggs.

These people felt very close to the earth; they looked with awe at the mountains that seemed to rule over the land and to protect it, and at the broad, strong river that was always flowing so mysteriously past their homes. Sometimes in early summer, when the first rains came, the river rose and flooded over their land, and they had to run for their lives to the wooded hills and build shelters and live there until the water went

* See the key to pronunciation on page xvii.

down again. What had happened? Was the river-dragon angry with them? For they believed that dragons lived in every river, and that there were sky-dragons, too, who brought the summer rains. Everything around them seemed to have life, even the stones. The mountains and the rivers were good and powerful, but some of the spirits of earth and sky seemed to be wicked and mischievous and these made them afraid.

Of course they wondered how the world was made and, like most nations, their wonderings turned into a story. When a child asked its mother, "What are the stars? Who made the sun?" The mother answered, "Pan Ku made it all. He was a mighty being who lived long, long ago, when earth and sky and water were all mixed up together, and there was no sun and no moon. Pan Ku stood in the midst of it all with a chisel and a mallet and he shaped the heavens and hewed out the earth. As he worked he grew, until he was so tall that he could lift up the heavens into their place and spread out the earth. He held the sun in one hand and the moon in the other. When it was all in order, Pan Ku died, but his death made his work perfect. His head became the mountains, his breath the winds and clouds, his voice the thunder, his blood the rivers, his flesh the soil; his bones became the rocks, and the marrow of his bones the metals and the precious stones that lie within the rocks."

Fu-hi thought a great deal about all this, and so did other men who were like him. The story of Pan Ku did not satisfy them. They wanted to know what meaning and what purpose there was in all that they saw, and how men ought to live. They wanted some plan for the people to live by. For just as you make a plan of a house before you build it, so a great civilization is usually built up according to a plan or a vision, and we call that sort of plan of life, a religion. These

men were beginning to think out the religion of the Black-haired People, and we shall hear more about it later. Though they believed in dragons and in spirits of nature, they felt that there was a great Power above all other powers, just as the sky is above all the things on earth. They called this Power "Tien," which means Heaven, or "Shang Ti," which means Supreme Lord. We call it God. Fu-hi went up on top of a high mountain in the east and worshipped God.



SHEN-NUNG was the next great leader. He may have come hundreds or even thousands of years after Fu-hi. We cannot tell. But he was called "The Divine Farmer" and it is said that he taught his people how to plow the ground and to plant grain, and how to cultivate and to harvest it. In other words, this Black-haired People was changing from a herding to a farming folk, and at this time that they call the reign of Shen-nung, they settled down, dwelt in villages and learned to live on what they could grow in the earth, grains and vegetables and fruits, instead of eating only animal food.

It was natural that they should do this, for the northwest part of China, where they were living, has one of the most extraordinary soils in the world. It is a fine, yellow soil without any stones in it and wise men say that it has been blown over that part of China for thousands of years from the western mountains and plateaus, by the strong winds that blow outward from the center of Asia during the winter. It is a very fertile soil, and although it has been used for over four thousand years, it still gives two fine crops of grain and vegetables a year. It is from the yellow color of this earth that the Huang

River gets its name (for Huang means yellow) because, as it flows through, it carries so much of the soil away that its waters are stained and muddied and even the Yellow Sea is colored, too. Some people say that yellow has, at times, been the imperial color of China for the same reason, because the people valued and loved their land beyond anything else.

For it is not only because the soil is good that it has yielded fine crops for four thousand years. Shen-nung taught them well and there are no better farmers in the world than the Chinese. Long before Europe, and still longer before America even began to be civilized, the Chinese knew how to care for the soil so that they would not use up that part of it that plants and vegetables feed upon. They found out that if they took their crops year after year out of the ground, they had to feed the ground in return, or else it became poor and useless so that nothing would grow in it. They learned that the earth feeds on all the things that we throw away : rotten things and dead things and the manure of men and animals. So they kept all these things, even their old clothing and the ashes of their fires, piled them into heaps and let them rot, and then laid them back on the fields. They dug canals everywhere to bring water to their crops, and threw the rich mud from the canal bottoms over the land. They plowed some of their crops into the earth, instead of reaping them, in order to feed the ground. They loved the soil and cared for it so well that it is, even now, as fresh and fertile as it was when they first plowed it thousands of years ago. Shen-nung learned to know the herbs and the plants that we make into medicines or poisons. And, like Fu-hi, he made songs for the farmers, and music to be played in the planting season and at the harvest festivals.

After they had become farmers, the Black-haired People increased and prospered, and spread through the valley of the



Huang-ho. There was nothing to stop them from going in and taking possession of the magnificent country which we call China and which they called "All that is under Heaven." The tribes of savage men in the hills and on the sea-coast were never as strong as the Hundred Families, and were driven farther and farther back into mountains and marshlands. Gradually, from the elbow of the Yellow River, the farmers pushed their way eastward across the tremendous plain of northern China toward the Shantung Peninsula, and southward to the even richer and more beautiful valley of the Yangtze River. (Look now and then at the map and keep these places clearly in your mind.) They drained the marshes in the valleys, cut away forests and brush, hewing, digging, clearing, day in and day out, until the land became gentle and fruitful. Villages surrounded by groves of trees or of waving bamboo, grew up on the hillsides and over the plains, and everywhere one heard cocks growing and dogs barking and men singing as they worked.

THE COUNTRY was so large now that it needed a different kind of leadership from that of Fu-hi or Shen-nung. One man could no longer reach all the people at once. There was need of government and religion and law and all the things that keep people at peace with each other and enable them to work together. The next great leader we hear about was Huang Ti,* "The Yellow Emperor," who made a united kingdom out of all the groups that were now scattered far and wide over the hills and the plains. Already they were so far separated that vigorous men had set themselves up as chiefs in various places, and refused to submit to Huang Ti's rule. But he knew that the people would be happier if they were all together under one government instead of being divided up into little states, and so he fought those chieftains and conquered them, left men whom he could trust in their place, and gave laws to all the people.

Huang Ti had roads made to join the different parts of the country together ; boats were built to travel up and down the rivers, for the Chinese had rather travel on water than on land, and are skillful boatmen ; wheeled carts were invented to carry heavy loads. Markets and fairs were established so that people from one place could trade their goods with those from another, and weights and measures were defined by law. Pottery was made, copper and other metals were mined and used for tools and for money. People became more skilled in music, and made flutes and bells and lutes with many strings. They loved music and believed that it could bring order and peace whenever it was played, among men or in nature, and so it was made not only for pleasure, but was a part of government and of religion. Blind men were taught to play the instruments, and many musicians were blind. Music was played at

* Be sure to pronounce these words right. Look at the key on page xvii.

the spring festivals when the grain was planted and in autumn when it was harvested ; at feasts in Huang Ti's court, and at those times of year when he, like Fu-hi, worshipped God.

Of course it took much longer than the lifetime of one man to do all this, but as the story was told from one person to another, the inventions and discoveries of many centuries were crowded into the reign of the Yellow Emperor, and we must tell the story as it has been told to us. All of this happened in about 2700 B.C.

Huang Ti had astronomers at his court, to study the stars and to make a calendar (which is a very hard thing to do) and historians, too, to record all that happened during his reign. They wrote on strips of bamboo or of wood, with a sort of varnish blackened with soot, and they used the writing that Fu-hi had invented. It began, as most writing does, with simple pictures of the things that people wanted to write about. ☉ meant the sun, and 𡵓 mountains ; 𡵑 stood for child and 𡵒 for river, and so forth. Soon, of course, they had to use words that were more difficult to write than these, and the way they made the new words is very interesting, for it shows what they thought about many things.

The signs for a woman and child, put together like this 𡵑𡵒 meant "good" ; a river with a bar across it 𡵒𡵒 meant "misfortune," because a river that is blocked in any way overflows, and floods have always been one of the great dangers of life in China. Anything that was whole and perfect was written this way 𡵑𡵒 for that is a picture of grain growing evenly in a field ; a hand and a drum 𡵑𡵒 meant "joy," for at a feast the drums were played ; two wide open eyes 𡵑𡵒 meant "fear" or "caution" ; the sun just above the horizon 𡵑𡵒 was "dawn," and a mouth 𡵑 with breath 𡵒 coming from it meant "words" ; a woman in a house 𡵑𡵒 stood for "peace." More

and more of these signs, which we call characters, were made as they were needed, and they finally grew into the beautiful and difficult written language that is still used by the descendants of the Hundred Families today.

One more discovery, almost the most important of all, was made at this time, and that, they say, was made by Huang Ti's wife, the empress Lei-tsu. This lady found out that by unwinding the cocoon of a little worm that feeds on mulberry leaves, a long thread can be pulled out, which is strong and shining and which can be woven into that lovely fabric that we call silk. The people had worn skins and leather at first, and then clothes made of wool or of hemp; they were delighted to find this soft, gleaming material for their clothes. They soon found out that by protecting and feeding the silkworms, they could make almost any quantity of silk, and so, although the farmers and the workmen still wore their woolen and hempen garments, everyone who could afford it wore silk all the time, wadding it thickly with wool or lining it with fur in the winter to make it warm.

Lei-tsu herself learned how to take care of the silkworms and she taught other women to do it. She had special sheds built for these little creatures who did such valuable work for men, and kept them on broad trays where they could be easily fed and tended. When the worm hatches from its egg, it has to be fed with fresh, tender mulberry leaves, and it eats an enormous amount of these leaves and grows very fast. So for weeks in the spring the girls and women were kept busy picking the leaves in the mulberry orchards and bringing them back in basket-loads for the hungry worms.

They gathered twigs, too, on which the cocoons could be made when the time came. For when it is full grown, the worm spins out of itself a thin thread which it wraps around

and around its body until it has formed a tight little cocoon as big as a man's thumb. There it lies sleeping, waiting to be turned into a winged moth. But alas, it never knows the joy of flight, for it is killed while it is still in the cocoon. Then the hardest part of the women's work began, for they must unwind the delicate silk thread, which was sometimes a thousand yards long, and it was hard to do this without breaking it. They found that if they wanted a perfect thread, they must take very good care of the worms, and keep their rooms clean and dry and airy, and at an even temperature.

This work has always been done by the women, just as the farming was done by the men, and very important work it was, for silkmaking has been one of the great industries of the Chinese for thousands of years, and it brought them great wealth later, when they could sell silk to other countries, which, like Rome, did not know how to make it. When the thread was reeled, they learned to do fine weaving; they found dyes to color the lovely cloth, and the Empress and her maidens embroidered her robes with bright pictures of birds and of flowers.

Probably, too, they embroidered on the Emperor's robes a dragon, with horny head and scaly claws, and on the Empress's a phoenix, a great bird with a pheasant's head and a long spreading tail. The dragon, as you know, was a water-spirit, and so to the Chinese he is not a wicked beast, as he is in our fairy tales, but good and powerful, the bringer of life and fruitfulness. He has come to be a symbol to them, of power and fertility, both of the body and the spirit, and that is why you will see him embroidered on the robes of emperors, and carved in stone upon their palaces. Dragons did not live only in rivers; some lived under the ground, humping it up into hills, and some in the skies; the rain dragon

slept underground all winter and in the spring rose up into the sky and brought the summer showers. Dragons lived deep in the seas, in pearly palaces ; and in caves, deep in the earth, guarding its treasures. They were never seen all at once ; sometimes a mighty tail, a head with flashing eyes, or the great curve of a body was seen by a few, so they say.

And the phoenix ? Some people think that it was a long-tailed pheasant, seen rarely in the southwestern forests, but the Chinese thought it a fairy bird, that came from the magic mountains, the Kuen Lun, in the west. It came only when the country was well ruled and the people were good. Its coming meant peace and happiness, and it was the special bird of the Empress.

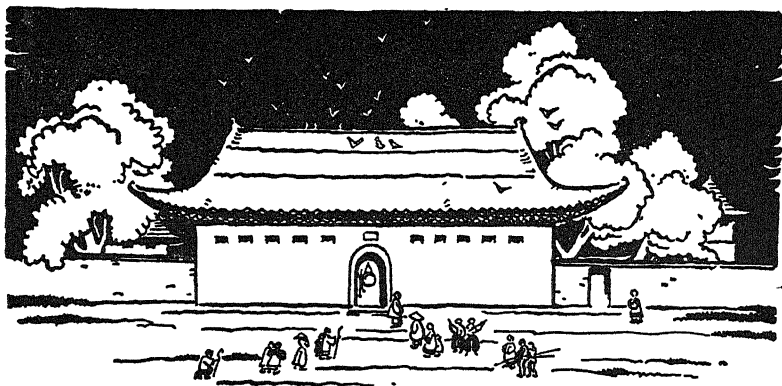
The dragon, the phoenix, and two other sacred animals, the turtle and the unicorn, stood beside Pan Ku when he made the world, and they knew things that were hidden from the eyes of men. The turtle was believed to be very wise, because it lived so long, and because the patterns on its shell look like some design or writing that could be read, if one knew how. Once one of the ancient kings was sitting by a river bank, thinking about his people, when a great turtle rose out of the water beside him. In the markings on its back he saw the answer to all his problems, and from them he worked out a plan that other men followed and perfected.

The unicorn was a shy creature with a deer's body and one long pointed horn on his forehead. He was very rarely seen — only when something very important was going to happen, or, like the phoenix, during peaceful and happy times. When Huang Ti had made peace throughout his kingdom ; when roads ran through every province and boats plied up and down the rivers ; when people traded fairly in the markets and courteously let each other pass on the roads, then in

Huang Ti's gardens the sleek white sides and the gentle deer's eyes of the unicorn were seen among the trees, and the phoenix nested on the palace roof.

The Hundred Families were a peaceful folk. They fought when they had to ; they won their land from the barbarians who might have kept them out of it, but they did not enjoy fighting. They loved their homes and their fields, and the things that grew and lived about them ; the mulberry trees, the groves of graceful bamboo that was so useful to them, the fruit trees and their blossoms ; the wild geese that flew north over their heads in the spring and south again in the autumn, the doves that cooed and wheeled around the village trees, and the crickets that crept into their houses and sang there when the first cold days came. They made songs about these things and sang them as they plowed the land, as they wove the silk, and as they rowed their boats down the long rivers.





CHAPTER 2

LEGENDARY TIMES

AFTER HUANG TI, there were other good rulers under whom the country grew and prospered. No others, however, were honored with the title of Ti, or Emperor ; they were called King, or Wang, and it is not for another two thousand years that we hear the higher title again. Between 2350 B.C. and 2250 B.C. there lived two kings whom the Chinese love and honor above all others, and who set the example for future rulers. These two were Yao and Shun.

The king was a very responsible person. He was called the Son of Heaven, and Heaven was believed to rule the kingdom through him. It was his task to see that God's will was done on earth. He stood between God and the people and served them both ; he was the high-priest of the nation as well as its ruler. He was sometimes called the One Man, because no one else was equal to him, and because he was expected to be the example and pattern of what every man should be.

He must care for the people as if they were all his own children. If he were good, they would be good also ; if his

family were happy and harmonious, all the families in his realm would be at peace. If he governed so rightly and wisely that his people had enough food and property and the right work, then no one would want to steal or murder or do anything wrong. For the Chinese believed that men were naturally good, and did wrong only when they were unhappy or in need. Therefore, the king looked at his kingdom as if he were looking into a mirror ; if he saw peace and happiness there, he knew that he was doing right, but if he saw misery and crime and want, he knew that he was doing wrong, and not taking proper care of his people. He was like a man standing between the sky and water : just as clear and quiet waters reflect the brightness of the sky, so his kingdom should reflect the divine order. Do you wonder that the people honored their king, and loved those who, like Yao and Shun, were worthy of such a tremendous task ?

Yao lived in a palace, built simply of earth and wood, that was not very different from the houses of his subjects. Lofty roofs and carved walls led only to pride and hence to ruin, it was thought. The palace was probably a low, broad building, facing south, with a roof whose corner ends turned upward, as Chinese roofs do nowadays. In it were open courtyards and many buildings for the business of government ; around it were groves of noble trees, and you can be sure that there were flowers in the courtyards and the gardens. On the palace door were hung a writing tablet and a drum. If any man thought of anything that ought to be done or that could be improved in the country, or if he knew that something wrong was being done, he came to the palace door and wrote his suggestion or his complaint on the tablet. Then he struck the drum and went away. As soon as the sound was heard by those within, a man was sent to bring in the tablet and

Yao read it carefully. In that way he kept in touch with all that was going on in the country, and knew what the people wanted. Yao said, "Are the people cold or hungry? It is my fault. Do they commit any crime? I should consider myself the guilty one."

You must not think, however, that he did everything for the people and left them no responsibility at all. The very opposite was true. The Chinese believed that the less the government did, the better it was, and that people are happiest when they do not think that they are being governed at all. They say that Yao was driving through the country one day when he saw an old man sitting by a stream, fishing, and singing to himself. He went near to the old man and heard him sing:

*We rise at dawn,
And rest at sunset;
We dig wells and drink,
We till our fields and eat;
What is the power of the King to us?*

And Yao smiled and drove on, glad that his people felt so free. Another time he heard a child singing in the streets:

*The people are ruled
By your perfect goodness;
Without knowing it, we follow
The example of our King.*

Yao remembered those two songs, for they helped him to be the wise king that he was. All the provinces were obedient to him, and prospered. Not only men, but animals and birds, even the insects and the reptiles, lived in peace, and the phoenix danced in the courtyards of his palace.

One misfortune happened during his reign. There was a terrible flood of the Huang-ho, which destroyed fields and villages and drove thousands of people from their homes. The Huang is a very dangerous river. It runs for hundreds of miles through the yellow soil that I have told you of, and that soil is so soft that the river carries away a great quantity of it, so that the water is always muddy and yellow. As the water flows on, the soil sinks slowly to the bottom and so much of it sinks down that the bottom of the river is built up higher and higher and the water is pushed up above its bed. So if there are heavy rains and it rises the least bit, it overflows its banks and floods all the country that is near. There is a rainy season in China and a dry season; the rains come in summer and the winter is dry. Therefore, in the summer, when the first rains come, rivers are very apt to overflow and floods have always been a great danger. And, because its bed keeps rising and because it flows through such flat country, there is no river that is so dangerous as the Huang-ho.

It does a very extraordinary thing besides. Sometimes, after a great flood, when the waters dry off and the land appears again, the people find that the great river has left its old bed and is flowing in an entirely different course. Now it empties into the Gulf of Chihli, north of the Shantung Peninsula, but for many centuries it entered the Yellow Sea south of Shantung, hundreds of miles away from its present mouth. And it has done that so often that a map of all its courses would look like a tangled skein of threads. Whenever that happens, or whenever it floods, villages and crops are wiped out and thousands of people are drowned or die of hunger because their food is destroyed. Do you wonder that they call this river "China's Sorrow"? In Yao's time the flood was terrible.

"Who will find me a man," he cried to his councillors, "who will work for me and deal with this calamity?"

"There is your son and heir, Choo," answered one of his courtiers; "he is very intelligent."

"Alas!" answered Yao, "he does not tell the truth and he quarrels with people. He will not do."

"The fame of your Minister of Works," suggested another, "has reached the most distant provinces."

"Alas!" answered Yao again, "when nothing happens, he talks very loudly, but his actions are very different from his words. He pretends to be modest, but he is really proud. See! The floods rise above the hills and the people groan and murmur. Who can deal with this disaster?"

His courtiers said, "Why not appoint Kwan?"

Yao said, "Alas! He is perverse. He disobeys orders and tries to hurt those who work with him." Still, since there was no one else, Kwan was appointed. He worked for a long time with no success, but fortunately he had a son named Yu, who was a much better man than his father. Kwan was dismissed from the task, and Yu undertook it. For nine years he labored mightily with the great river, and finally conquered it. He deepened its channel in some places and raised the banks in others; he followed it upstream and widened its course where it was hemmed in too narrowly by rocky hills. He took care of the homeless and hungry people, teaching them to clear the hillsides when the lowlands were flooded, and to hunt animals for food when their grain was lost. He worked without rest, traveling up and down the land, giving no thought to himself. When he married, he stayed only a few days with his young wife, and when his little son was born, he passed by his own home and heard the baby crying, but did not even stop, though he longed to do so. The people

loved him and were grateful to him for his work. They said, "We should all have been fishes, if it had not been for Yu."

When that danger was past, the Black-haired People lived in peace, planting and weaving, finding new colors for silk and new clays for pottery, digging more minerals out of the rocks, fashioning new designs and shapes with their skillful hands, telling stories of gods and demons, of the heavenly mountains in the west, and the mysterious ocean in the east. Their lives were as rhythmic as the seasons.



As Yao grew old, he looked again for a man, not only to help him, but to reign after him, for in those days the king's son did not necessarily become the next king. You know now what he valued in people; notice what sort of man he chose. He said to his chief minister, "I have been on the throne for many years. You can carry out my wishes. I give my place to you." But the minister said, "I am not good enough. I would disgrace the throne." "Then show me someone who can take my place," said Yao, "one who is

noble and wealthy, or one who is lowly and poor." And his councillors said to him, "There is an unmarried man among the people named Shun. His father is blind and stubborn; his stepmother hates him and does not tell the truth, and his stepbrother is proud and disagreeable. But in spite of these faults, he lives in peace with them, is always loving and polite, and is gradually leading them to self-control, so that they are not as bad as they were." Yao was pleased and said, "Yes, I have heard of that man. I will test him further." If you had been told those things about a man, and nothing more, would you have picked him out to be king over a great country? Remember that living happily with one's family was a part of kingship.

For in China, the family was even more important than it is in our country, and it was very much larger. In our country, a family is usually made up of a father and mother and their children; perhaps one or two of their relatives may live with them, but usually each family has its own house. In China, however, when a man grew up, he did not leave his father's house; he brought his wife home with him and they lived with his parents in one big household. His brothers did the same thing, so that there were several families living together in the one home. The houses were built around open courtyards, and new houses and new courtyards could be added if they were needed, so that there was room for every one. No one left the home except the daughters when they married, for then they went to their husbands' homes and lived with their parents-in-law.

The oldest man, usually the grandfather, was the head of the household; he was called the Elder, and no matter how old the sons and the grandsons were, they must respect and obey him, and they could do nothing important without his

permission. His wife, the grandmother, had charge of all the housekeeping, and the unmarried daughters and the sons' wives must obey her and serve her. When the Elder died, his oldest son took his place, and the life of the household went on as before. Nothing belonged to any one person, for everything belonged to the family. All that the men raised in the fields or earned by their work was brought home and shared by everyone, and the women did the work of the house together. When anything important had to be done, the Elder called a family council, and they decided together what they should do. The family arranged the marriages of the sons and daughters, and decided what work the boys should be prepared for; if one of the sons wanted to go to another village or province and make his home there, he must ask the consent of the Elder. This way of living bound them all very closely together, and gave them a very strong family feeling.

When the old people died, food and clothing were put in their graves, for it was believed that their spirits went right on living and would need those things. At certain times of the year food and gifts were offered to them again, so that they would be happy and comfortable in the next world; and the family told them any important events that had happened—the birth of a child, a flood, a drought, a good harvest—just as if they had been alive, and asked their blessing on all that was being done. For if their spirits still lived, would they not be deeply interested in all that went on at home?

The household was a little community, where each one lived for the good of all. It was like a tiny state. That was why it was so important for a king, or for anyone else, to live happily with his family. If he could be obedient and reverent to his parents, and live at peace with his brothers and sisters,

and love all his brothers' children nearly as much as his own ; if he could live so well that there were no quarrels and no unhappiness in such a big household, then, indeed, he was fit to govern a province or a kingdom. That was why Yao was pleased when he heard about Shun.

Now this Shun was a poor man who lived in the country with his parents, and farmed the land for them and fished in the rivers, cut wood in the forests, and made pottery out of the clay by the river's edge. His family was just as bad as the minister said they were. But he was so patient and so virtuous that he was known all over his province, and some people said that even the birds came and picked the weeds out of his fields and that even the animals came and dragged his plow, because they loved him. A village gathered around his farm, and the village grew to a town and the town became a city. Finally he was brought to the king's notice, as we have seen, although he had never left his own home.

When Yao said, "I will test him further," he meant to test him in every relationship of life, to see if he was perfect. So he sent Shun two of his daughters to be his wives (for in China a man could marry more than one wife, if he wanted to), and he gave him also flocks of sheep and cattle and built barns and granaries for him, so that he would have plenty.

After this his family hated him more than ever. He was working with his father and his brother one day to repair the roof of a granary. He was up under the roof and they were on the ground below. They took away the ladder and set fire to the building, meaning to kill him, but he got safely to the ground. Another time they sent him down to clean out a well and when he was at the bottom of it they shovelled in earth and stones, meaning to bury him. This time they thought they had succeeded, as they did not see him escape

through a passage that had been dug through the earth in another direction. Siang, his brother, swaggered back to the house, saying, "The whole credit of getting rid of this fellow belongs to me. My parents may have his cattle and his sheep, his barns and his granaries. But I will have his spear and his shield, his bow and his lute, and his two wives shall serve me." So he went on to Shun's part of the house and walked in, and there was Shun, sitting on his couch, playing his lute! Siang stopped and said, "I was anxious about you, and came to see if you were well." But he turned very red as he said it. Shun did not reproach him and nothing more was said about what had occurred, but they did not try to kill him again.

Shun not only lived happily with the king's daughters, but they, too, under his influence, became kind and humble, and served his father and his stepmother reverently, as daughters-in-law should. And gradually his parents and his disagreeable brother became more reasonable and polite and the house was peaceful.

When Yao heard this he called Shun to his court and made him his chief minister. He sent him all over the country, to teach every family how to live in peace. The king was a very old man now and it must have been a great comfort to him to find so wise a person to help him and to be king after him. The two ruled together, though Shun never forgot that Yao was the king and he the minister, and never failed in all due courtesy and respect. Yao gave over to Shun the serious business of government and even let him make the great religious sacrifices that only the king might offer.

Since the king stood between Heaven and the people, and was their high-priest, it was he who prayed and sacrificed to Heaven. He did this once a year, in a very beautiful way. On the longest night of the year, our twenty-first of December,

he watched and fasted all night long, and before dawn he went with his court, in their most beautiful robes and by the light of flaring torches, to a hill or to a raised open altar, near the palace. There a young bull, all of one color, was killed and burned, and there, in the cold darkness, under the stars, the king knelt and bowed his head to the ground, worshipping God and offering his prayer, while his ministers stood a little below him. He did it at that time, which we call the winter solstice, because right after the longest night of the year the sun begins to come northward again, blessing the earth with its warmth and light, just as the king wanted Heaven to bless the kingdom.

He was also the only one who might worship the four sacred mountains that stood like guardians in the four quarters of the land, and the great rivers without which the earth would have been barren and useless.

So now it was Shun, the farmer and the fisherman, who sacrificed the young bull in the dark winter night, and it was he who journeyed east, south, west and north, to honor the sacred mountains. First he went to Mount Tai, in the province of Shantung, traveling probably by boat down the Huang, then landing with his followers and going in two-wheeled chariots, drawn by the short, stocky, Chinese horses, to where the splendid mountain rises steeply out of the plain.

There he was met by the princes of the eastern provinces, who came to offer their homage and to report to him the condition of their lands. The country was too large to be governed directly by one man, and so it had been, from Huang Ti's time, divided into provinces which were given to trustworthy princes to rule over. This kind of government is called feudalism, and it was almost the only way a big country could be governed before there were good roads

and quick ways of sending messages and armies from one place to another. Each prince had full power to govern his own province, and to fight any enemies that threatened it, but he was responsible to the king for everything he did and had to appear regularly before him. He, too, must look at his province as if it were a mirror, and prove to the king that he was worthy of his trust. If he did not govern well, he was given less land, or perhaps he was removed entirely and someone else was put in his place.

When Shun met the princes of the east, he heard all that they had to say, and he regulated their calendars and the measures of length and weight, and made sure that they were observing all the religious ceremonies. Just as the king sacrificed to the great mountains and rivers of China, so the princes sacrificed to the hills and the streams that were in their own territories. They worshipped, too, the spirits of the land and the grain, who gave them good crops, and it was very important that all these ceremonies should be performed reverently and beautifully, at the proper seasons.

Then Shun went to the other sacred mountains, to Mount Heng, in Hunan, to Mount Hwa, in Shensi, and to another Mount Heng in Chihli. In each place, the princes of that region met him as they had at Mount Tai.

He made this journey, which was both a pilgrimage and a tour of inspection, once every five years. The other four years, the feudal princes came to the king and paid their homage and made their reports at his court. If they had ruled well, they were presented with embroidered robes and handsome chariots by the king. They took part in the court ceremonies, talked with the royal ministers, and went back to their domains with added wisdom and loyalty.

After Shun had served for several years as Prime Minister, Yao died, and all the country mourned the good old king. For three years the Hundred Families wore undyed clothes and no musical instrument was touched throughout the land, so sad were all hearts. Shun went quietly about the business of the kingdom, carrying out his accustomed duties, and no change was made during those three years. But when they were over, he retired from the court into the south, in order to leave the throne free to Yao's son, Choo, if he desired it and if Heaven wished him to rule in his father's place. And how did Shun know what was the will of Heaven? He looked at the people and saw it reflected there. For when the princes came to make their yearly report, they did not stop to speak to Yao's son, but drove on to Shun's retreat and paid their homage to him. Men who had been treated unjustly passed by the king's son, and sought out Shun to lay their wrongs before him. And as men sang at their work, in the fields, up and down the rivers, in the towns and market places, their songs were always about Shun, but never about Choo. So after a while Shun said, "It is the will of Heaven," and he came back and took up the full duties of kingship.

The king had advisers, or ministers, to help him in the great task of government, and it was a part of his duty to choose wise and honorable ones. He must not let any able or good man be hidden, but must, by his own example, attract them to his court, so that they would want above all things to work for him and for the people. And just as a man's hands and feet and eyes and ears serve his mind, so these ministers served their ruler. When they came into his presence they bowed before him with their heads to the ground, but they spoke very frankly to him nevertheless, and a good king, as you shall see, could not get along without them.

Shun had a fine group of ministers and you can guess by their names what each of them had to do. There was a Minister of Works, a Minister of Instruction, a Minister of Agriculture, a Minister of Crime, a Forester, an Arranger of the Ancestral Temple, a Director of Music, A Minister of Communications, the Chief Minister, who was called the President of the Four Mountains, and a General Regulator who superintended all of the Departments. To each of these Shun said, "Be reverent ! Bring harmony into your department and so help me in the business that is intrusted to me by God."

He said to the Director of Music, "Teach our sons, so that they shall be truthful, and yet gentle ; mild, and yet dignified ; strong without being hard ; and active without being proud. Through music all things are brought into harmony."

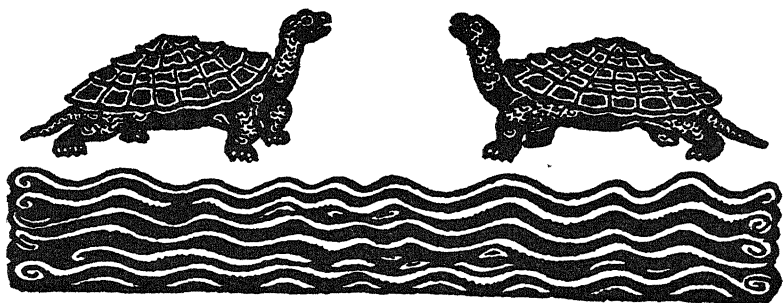
"When I strike my instruments," his minister answered, "even the animals dance together."

For General Regulator, Shun chose Yu, the man who had worked so mightily at the time of the floods. Yu continued his labors in his new position, and I will tell you what he did when we come to his own reign, for he was king after Shun. Just as Yao had chosen Shun, so, after a long and peaceful reign, Shun chose Yu. He presented him to Heaven. It was as if he said, "Here is a man who is worthy to be Your son and to carry out Your will on earth. If You so desire, let him be king after me."

Then Shun died and all the kingdom mourned for him as they had for Yao, for they thought that they could never have such good kings as those two. They wore no colors and touched no music for three long years. Mothers and fathers told their children all that I have told you, and very much more, about these two great men. And children never got tired of hearing the story of Shun and his family, and how

he became king. Not only children, but men and women, emperors and farmers, workmen and princes, were proud to walk in the path of homely heroism that Shun had trodden out for them ; and for centuries to come, ministers reminded their kings of the wise ways of Yao.





CHAPTER 3

THE FIRST TWO DYNASTIES

YU, then, became the next king. Before that, you remember, in Yao's time, he had controlled the floods of the Huang-ho and under Shun he had been General Regulator, or Prime Minister. The work with the floods had given him a taste for exploration and in Shun's reign he performed another great task for his country. He traveled to the limits of every province, inspecting its soil and its products, improving its water-ways and deciding what tax or tribute each province should pay to the king.

Having seen what destruction could be caused by floods, he gave especial attention to the rivers. He deepened their beds, so that they would not so easily overflow, he dug canals to provide them with extra outlets, and reservoirs to hold the superabundant waters. Indeed, if we are to believe all that is told about him, he must have performed tremendous feats of engineering. He is probably given the credit for a great deal of work which was started by his energy and example and carried out by many other men. He is said to have changed the courses of some rivers entirely, digging new beds for them, directing them into safer courses, until finally he had led them all, great and small, harmlessly to the sea, like reverent feudal lords bringing tribute to their king.

He went eastward to the sea-coast, to the farthest cape of Shantung, northward through Chihli and Shansi, southward below the Yangtze and westward until he met the "moving sands" of the desert of Gobi, into which it was useless to penetrate. He went in boats on the rivers, in carts or chariots on land, in sledges on the ice, and on foot over the steep mountains. The farthest boundaries of the kingdom were called "the footsteps of Yu." Everywhere he opened roads leading from the farthest points to the center of the kingdom. And a great kingdom it was over which Shun ruled! It was already as large as France is now, and it was held together by the loyalty of its feudal princes and the wisdom of its kings. Each province paid tribute in its own products and Yu decided how much could justly be required of each one.

From the eastern provinces by the sea came salt and varnish, lead, and always silk. The small fishing craft sent a part of their haul, and on land men wove cloth from hemp and other fibres. The wild people who lived on the sea islands sent garments made of fur. Other savage tribes (who, you remember, had been driven to the edges of the kingdom and to the mountains) were treated in a friendly way and were taught to herd sheep and to farm. They brought down, in baskets, silk from worms that fed on the mountain mulberry trees, and added it to the tribute that was sent up the long rivers to the capital.

Inland, between the Ho and the Yangtze, in the province of Anwhei, the soil was rich and the trees luxuriant. The people sent as tribute earth of five colors for the altar of the god of the land, bright-colored pheasants from their forests, and sounding stones that were used for musical instruments. The wild tribes from the coasts sent pearls and fish and baskets full of deep-blue and checkered silks.

At this time the Chinese had not penetrated very far south of the Yangtze river ; they did not know the southern sea-coast ; but that part of China is now one of the richest of all, and even then it sent in abundant tribute. Gold, silver and copper were sent to the clever craftsmen of the capital ; fine wood for bows and arrows, cinnabar, prized for its red color, flint and whetstones and bamboo. No province failed to send its quota of silk and from the south came baskets laden with blue and deep purple fabrics. Can you not see these things, packed by careful hands and piled upon the boats, carried almost entirely by water, from one river to another, up to the capital in distant Shansi ? From the coast came strings of pearls that were not quite round, but that were much prized for ornaments ; and occasionally a big sea-tortoise was caught and sent, to the great delight of the king.

In the western part of China Proper lies the now prosperous province of Szechuan. In Yu's time it was little known and its steep and cloudy hills were inhabited by savage peoples. But the Chinese had entered its eastern plains and mined in its richly-veined mountain-sides. They sent fine gold and iron and silver, stones for arrow-heads, and the skins of the bears and the foxes that were abundant there.

Little known, too, were the wide and arid regions that open from northwestern China into the heart of the continent. There jade was found, the smooth, soft-colored stone that the Chinese love so well, and there lived scattered tribes of wild horsemen who submitted to Yu and brought him hair-cloth and skins. Later these tribes became China's persistent and powerful enemies, whom we call the Tartars.

Yu's intimate knowledge of the whole country was very useful to him when he became king. Then he could no longer travel, except on the royal tours of inspection, since he had

the whole business of government in his hands. But he knew the country that he governed. He divided it anew into nine provinces, putting the best of the feudal princes at the head of each division. The whole land was obedient to him and lived at peace, excepting the chief of one barbarian tribe, the Miao, who lived in the west. This man had been rebellious for a long time, even during Shun's reign. Yu called his army together and said, "You multitudes here arrayed, listen to my orders. This prince of the Miao is stupid, ignorant and disrespectful. He thinks that he alone is virtuous and able and he rebels against his rightful lord. Heaven is sending down calamities upon him, and we, my gallant men, must punish his crime. Go forth with united heart and strength and you shall be crowned with success."

This was not the case, however. They did not succeed, and the prince of the Miao continued to rebel and remain disobedient to any orders. Then Yu's minister, Yi, came to him and said, "Goodness moves Heaven and can reach to any distance. When you are proud, you lose; but when you are humble you win: this is the way of Heaven. If truth and goodness move Heaven, will they not also move this prince of Miao?" Yu bowed to his wisdom and said, "Yes." Then he called back his armies, and instead of fighting, he made the whole country feel the joys of peace. His soldiers danced in the courtyards of the palace, waving their shields and the long feathers that were used in dancing. Everyone was happy—and they say that in seventy days the prince of the Miao came and surrendered to Yu of his own accord. He wanted to join such a pleasant kingdom.

Yu wished to know, just as Yao had, how his people felt and what they wanted. He hung at his palace door four instruments: a drum, a gong, a rattle and a triangle. If a

man wanted to tell Yu how he could become a better king, he struck the drum ; if anyone wanted him to do something for the country, he beat the gong ; if injustice had been done, the wronged man ran to the palace and shook the rattle ; and if there were rebellion or famine in any province, the messenger struck the triangle. At the sound of any of the four instruments, an attendant was sent at once to bring the man who had touched it into the king's presence.

Yu made the tour of the provinces once every five years, traveling over ground that was familiar to him and seeing the fruits of his former work. In one province they brought to him as a gift some wine, which they had just learned to make by fermenting rice. He drank some of it, and then feeling in himself how it quickened his blood and excited his feelings, he poured the rest upon the ground. "Alas," he said, "what misfortune this will cause!" And he ordered the maker of the wine to be exiled to a distant province. The knowledge, unfortunately, was not lost with its discoverer, as you shall see.

Traveling back to the capital in his chariot, he met a gang of criminals, chained together. He ordered his charioteer to stop, and went over to the unfortunate men. "What have you done," he asked, "that you should be so punished?" And when they told him, he wept. His courtiers came to him and tried to take him away. "Why do you weep, Great Yu?" they asked, "Why pity these men? They are criminals and deserve no kindness." "Alas!" answered Yu, "when Yao and Shun were on the throne, the people were good. I weep because I am less good than they, and so men do evil, as these men have done."

Though some men were bad and some were rebels, the country prospered while so fine a king ruled it, and when, on one

of his tours of the country, Yu died, many people thought that the best days of China's history had passed with him. For he kept the ways of Yao and Shun, and the kingdom grew and flourished like a strong tree whose every leaf is healthy.

Now Yu was a very old man when he died and he had planned that the wise minister Yi, who had advised him about the prince of the Miao, should be king after him. So he had presented Yi to Heaven before his death. After the years of mourning were over, Yi did as Shun and Yu had done; he withdrew from the court and left the throne to Yu's son, Ki. But this time a different thing happened. Ki was a fine young man, and the people, instead of passing by him and going to Yi when they needed help, chose him for king, saying, "He is our king's son, let him rule over us."

So after that the throne of China was hereditary—that is, the king no longer chose his successor, but when he died, one of his sons became the next king. Yu was the first king of the first dynasty of China, and his reign began about 2159 B.C. Any line of kings, all of whom belong to the same family, is called a dynasty, and history, especially a long history like that of China, is often measured by dynasties, instead of by years or centuries. We say that something happened in the Ming Dynasty or the Chou Dynasty, instead of giving the exact year. In ancient China there were three dynasties, Yu's, which is called the "Hia," which lasted about four hundred years; the "Shang" which lasted six hundred years, and the "Chou" which lasted almost nine hundred years and came to an end in 255 B.C.



YOU KNOW what a Chinese king should be, and what the people expected of him, but I need not tell you that every king was not like Yao and Shun and Yu. A man was not necessarily wise or good or strong just because he was the son of a king. Since the people depended so much on their ruler, a bad king could cause a great deal of trouble.

Yu's son, Ki, was an able king and with the aid of his father's ministers and others, he kept the nine provinces united and comfortable. His son, however, who had not known the great Yu, and who had not earned the throne but had merely been born to it, cared more for pleasure than for duty. He was idle ; he loved hunting, and trampled down the farmers' crops as he chased the wild boar across the fields. Once he went off on a hunting trip and did not return for a hundred days. What a king was this ! Was it wise to make the throne hereditary ? Others who came after him were very careless about their duty and seemed to think that they were given power and luxury in order to enjoy themselves the more. They forgot ever to look into that great mirror, the life of the people, to see their own characters ; they forgot to make their own lives a pattern for those of their princes, and the princes forgot to set an example to the lesser people ; and when that happened, the country was upset and unhappy. At last there was one king whom no one could stand.

His name was Kieh ; he was so strong that he could twist iron bars into ropes, and he was cruel. He had married a very beautiful woman who was worse than he, and they amused themselves by hurting other people. In every unjust way they seized the money and property of wealthy people until only the poor were safe ; they invented tortures and killed those who criticized them. They spent the public money on pal-

aces and pleasure gardens. The seasons bored Kieh, so he built a palace without any windows. It was cooled in summer and warmed in winter and it was always lighted with hundreds of colored lanterns so that he did not know whether it was day or night, spring or autumn. In it he amused himself in every wicked way. In the garden he had a pond dug and filled it with wine (the wine that Yu had poured upon the ground) ; then he made the people come and drink until they were maddened by the wine, and his wife, Mei-hi, thought that was fine fun.

A wise old minister, though he knew well the danger of what he was doing, came to Kieh and talked very plainly to him. "How can you expect the protection of Heaven," he asked, "when you act so wickedly ? Send away this woman who is ruining you and your kingdom and change your ways before Heaven punishes you."

Kieh laughed. "The sun is not more sure of his place in the heavens," said he, "than I am of my throne." And he ordered his attendants to take the old man out and cut off his head.

One of the strongest of the feudal princes, named Tang, gave the old minister a magnificent funeral, paying him the honor that is due a hero. Other princes and governors of territories grew restless ; they did not come to court to pay homage and bring tribute, but trained their armies for battle. The people, who depended on their king as the land depends on rain, knew very well how Kieh was failing them and began to talk about Tang and to look to him for leadership. They knew very well that Kieh was not ruling according to God's will and did not have His protection. They gave their loyalty to the man who was the true Son of Heaven, and not

just to anyone who happened to be on the throne, as you have already seen in the case of Yao's son and Shun's heir. When a king was as bad as Kieh, there was only one thing to do ; they must find someone more worthy of their trust. They knew the kind of king they needed ; they turned to Tang and asked him to lead a rebellion. The other feudal princes came to him also, offering him their help, and a minister of the King's urged him to put an end to Kieh's unworthy reign. Tang refused for a time, as he honored the dynasty of Yu too much to want to overthrow it, but at last he was persuaded. Princes, ministers and people had chosen him, and he took their choice as the reflection of Heaven's choice, and accepted the responsibility.

He sacrificed a young bull, all of one color, to Heaven, and asked permission to punish Kieh. Then he called the men in his own territory together and made a speech to them. The Chinese do not love war, and some of them left their beloved fields and their homes unwillingly. "Come," said Tang, "and listen to me. I, who am like a little child, would never dare to undertake this rebellion, but Heaven is sending me to destroy Kieh because of his many crimes. I know that you are saying to yourselves, 'Our prince has no pity on us, calling us from our farming to attack the king. What are his crimes to us ?' But I tell you that Kieh is guilty ; he is oppressing the country and everywhere people are saying, 'When will he die ?' Now as I fear God, I must go and punish him. Help me, the One Man, I pray you, to carry out the judgment of God. I will reward you greatly and you can trust me ; I will not break my promises."

They followed him, the other princes joined him, people flocked to increase his armies, and he marched upon the capi-

tal. Kieh's soldiers, of course, felt very little devotion to him or to his cause, and were soon defeated. Mei-hi killed herself and Kieh fled to a distant province, where he remained in banishment.

Tang was made king, and with him, in 1766 B.C., began the dynasty of Shang, which was his family name. He was called Ching Tang, Tang the Successful or Victorious, but he was not proud of his victory. He was always afraid that he had done wrong in taking the throne from the descendant of Yu, for this was the first time that anyone had rebelled against the king and Tang feared that he might have set a bad example to future times. I Yin, the wise minister who had helped him, reassured him, and as he went through the country on his tours of inspection, he himself could see how everywhere the people were becoming happy again, like plants after rain. When he went east, the tribes in the west murmured, saying, "Will he never come to us?" And when he went south, the northern people said, "Why does he come to us last?" He put each province in order, regulating its ceremonies and its industries, and when he left, men went home to their families and said, "We have waited for our prince; he has come and all is well again."

He was just even to the animals. Hunting was a great sport in old China. The hills and mountains were still thickly forested, the farmers had to clear their land little by little, and often in the morning they saw tracks of deer and wild boar, tigers or wild oxen, across their carefully tilled fields. The nobles hunted for many reasons: to drive the wild beasts back from the homes of men, to get food, and for the fun of it. When they went hunting they arranged men in a great circle around the hunting grounds, and then ordered them

to walk forward, driving the animals towards the center of the circle, where the nobles stood in their chariots, with their bows and arrows ready. Sometimes instead of having men drive the animals, they set fire to the fields or the marshes, and let the fire drive the beasts into great nets that had been stretched across the land to catch them. There were many animals to hunt—besides the ones I have told you, there were panthers and leopards, foxes (whose fur they loved to wear), hares, and many others. One time Tang went hunting and saw that the net had been stretched around the whole hunting ground, and that a prayer had been written and fastened on it saying, "May everything from the four quarters of the world enter into my net!" Tang said, "Oh, then everything would be caught!" So he took down a part of the net, leaving it across only one side of the field, and he wrote on it, "Go to the right if you like, go to the left if you like, but if you have had enough of life, come into my net." And his nobles said, "Tang's goodness is great, for it reaches even the birds and the beasts."



During his reign there was a terrible drought. As you know, there is a rainy season and a dry season in China ; the summer is rainy and the winter is dry. Rain was needed to raise the crops, and so each spring, as the time came to plant the precious grain, men watched eagerly for the first clouds, and in the first month of summer the king offered a sacrifice and prayed for abundant rainfall.

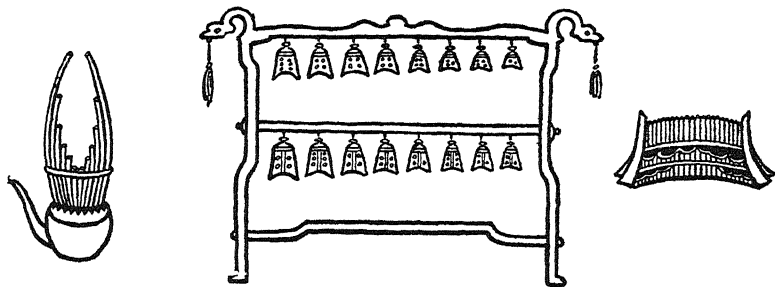
But in Tang's time no rain fell, year after year. Because of some disturbance of the climate, the summer sun rose hot and pitiless in a clear sky, week after week, and the grain withered in the hard dry ground. After a year or two of this the people starved. Tang distributed money freely among them, but money is of little use when there is nothing to buy. At last it was thought that someone must have done wrong, since the order of the seasons was so upset, and so much suffering had come upon the kingdom. It was decided to make a special sacrifice to Heaven. Tang, who was a king of Yao's kind, said, "If there is to be a sacrifice, I will be the victim." And he cut off his hair and his long finger nails, which in China are a sign of nobility, dressed himself all in white, and getting into a simple carriage, drawn by white horses, he drove to a sacred mulberry grove near the capital. There he prayed, "Has this misfortune come because of my sins ? Have I employed bad officers ? Have I spent too much money on palaces, or have I loved beauty too well ? Have I bribed or allowed evil to be spoken at my court ?"

While he was in prayer, it began to rain ; then the rain fell abundantly and the land was at peace. Indeed, it does not seem as if misfortune could have come because of him, for he was a good man and a wise king. He had written upon his bath-tub, "If you wish to become perfect, purify yourself every day, purify yourself every day."

He was not a young man when he became king, and he died after a reign of only thirteen years, leaving the throne to his son.

I must tell you a story about Tang's son and his Prime Minister, that same I Yin who had served Tang so well. When a king died, his Prime Minister usually taught the son the science and the art of government, guiding the state with his experienced hands until the young king was able to take up his full duties. Tang's son was a rather light-minded young man who did not take his kingship with sufficient reverence. I Yin was much troubled about him. After deep thought, he had a humble little house built beside Tang's tomb, and there he put the young king, and kept him there until the three years of mourning for his father were over. I Yin saw to it that the prince lived simply and that he was taught and disciplined every day in all that he should know and do. After the three years Tang's son was a changed man. I Yin brought him back to his palace and the King bowed to his Minister with his head to the ground, saying, "I was a little child, with no understanding of what was right. My beginning has been a bad one, but do you teach and correct me so that my end may be good." Then I Yin bowed to his King, with his head to the ground, saying, "O King, Heaven loves only those who are reverent. The people love those who are kind. Your father was kind to the distressed and suffering as if they were his children and the people obeyed him gladly. When you climb high, you start where it is low ; when you travel far, you start from where it is near. Think of what the people are doing and realize their difficulties. Do not rest upon the throne ; the Heaven-given seat is not an easy one. Let the One Man be greatly good, and all the land will be rightly ordered by him."

Do you see what an important person a minister was ? All the way through Chinese history you find these wise and devoted men, as you also find crafty and wicked ones, who used their power wrongly. The words of one king of the Shang dynasty show you what a minister was expected to be. This young King, after his father's death, mourned him for three years in complete silence, while his ministers, as was customary, ruled the kingdom for him. Apparently, however, there was none among them whom he trusted perfectly. Even after the three years were over, he kept silent, and his councillors were bewildered. They came to him respectfully and said, "The Kingdom is ruled by the King's words. How can we receive and carry out orders if he does not speak ?" Then the King wrote on a tablet : "I have been afraid that I was not worthy to rule. Therefore I have not spoken. But while I have been silently and reverently thinking I dreamed that God sent me a minister to help me." And he described very exactly the person of whom he had dreamed. A search was made all through the land for such a person, and finally, in the distant province of Fukien, an old man, a builder, was found, who was just like the King's description. He was brought to court, and became, in truth, a wise and helpful advisor. The King kept him at his side and said to him, "Teach me in the morning and in the evening. I am a weapon of steel and you are my whetstone. I am crossing a dangerous stream, and you are my boat and its oars. I am the land in drought, and you are the rain. Enrich my mind with the treasures of your mind. Be like medicine, which is bitter, but which cures the patient. Help me, that I may follow in the footsteps of my high ancestors and give peace to the millions of the people."

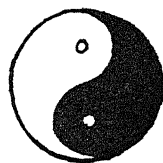


CHAPTER 4

ALTAR AND TEMPLE

FU-HI worshipped God on a high mountain, and the kings who came after him worshipped at the time of the winter solstice. Shun visited the four sacred mountains and the great rivers, and the princes sacrificed to those that were in their own provinces. The people believed in the spirits of earth and sky, and they bowed down to their ancestors and made offerings to them. Did these different acts and beliefs fit into one pattern, and if so, what pattern? What religion, what plan of life did the Hundred Families have?

As you know, they believed in a Power which they called Heaven, or Supreme Lord. This Power was kind and wise; it governed all things justly. But how was the world made: by Pan Ku, whose body made the mountains and the rocks? No, men had thought back to a deeper cause than that. They believed that in the beginning Heaven had sent forth two breaths, or forces, and by those two forces everything that we can perceive was made. One of them is bright, warm, active and alive; the other is dark, cold, solid and still. They called the bright force Yang and the dark force Yin. The symbol on this page explains them better than anything else. The circle means everything: our whole uni-



verse. The light and the dark parts which fit together and completely fill the circle, are the Yang and the Yin. They fill all space and out of them both all things are made. You could not see anything, for instance, if there were not both light and shadow. You cannot see any shape when it is quite dark, and you could not see any shape in the light, either, if there were not some shadow to define it. If everything were light and nothing heavy, things could not stay in place, plants could not grow upward and we could not build anything or even keep our feet on the ground. So, if you think hard, you will find that there are two opposite qualities in everything that is made, and these opposites are always playing with each other and forming every possible kind of combination. Sometimes there is more of one and less of the other. The earth, which is heavy and dark, is mostly Yin, while the air and the sun are almost entirely Yang. Summer is Yang and winter is Yin. Yang is the creative activity of Heaven that gives life, and Yin is the solid substance that lets itself be made into any form Heaven desires. Yang gives out and multiplies; Yin draws in and holds together. From them are formed the five elements: water, wood, earth, metal and fire. From the five elements our world is made and all the creatures that live on it.

Now the Yang and the Yin obey eternal laws, and there is an order and a rhythm in all that they do, just as there is a beautiful rhythm in that design that represents them. Since everything is made from them, this order can be seen all through the universe; in the motions of sun, moon and stars and in the seasons: the awakening and growth of plants in the spring, their blossoming and fruitfulness in summer, the harvesting of autumn and the stillness and repose of the earth in winter. It can be seen in the rain and the flowing of the rivers, in the growth of trees, the migrations of birds, the lives

of tiny insects, the pattern of snow-flakes. The Chinese felt it all about them, and felt, too, that it ran through their own lives, through every day and year, through their smallest or greatest acts. They called it Tao, the Way ; the way in which all things were made and in which they ought to live. For if one understood this divine order, and acted according to it, one would be happy and blessed, but woe betide the man who paid no attention to it and acted according to his own selfish will ! He would be running against the mighty laws of Heaven, and would be sure to meet with misfortune and ruin sooner or later.

How were men to keep their lives in tune with the Way of Heaven ? God made man good, said the Chinese, and gave him certain qualities that led him to live rightly—kindness, good manners, knowledge, uprightness and honor. These were the Five Virtues that belonged to every man ; if he did not use them, that was his own fault. He must also keep a right and happy relation with everything else in the world, with other people, with the earth and sky and all living creatures.

This rightness of relationship is the very basis and foundation of the long history of China. The idea of it belongs so completely to the Black-haired People that there is no English word into which I can translate it. So I am going to give you the Chinese word and ask you to remember it. The word is Li and it looks like this when it is written. It is sometimes translated as ceremony, or form, but it means more than that. Li means right behavior toward every one and everything : toward your family, your neighbor, toward Earth and Heaven and God. The Way, the Tao



itself, depended on everyone's Li, for how could it flow through and harmonize all things, if it were blocked or turned aside by wrong behavior? If a king forgot his people, or a child did not respect his parents, if husband and wife quarreled, or a prince did not honor the mountains and rivers of his province, the heavenly current might be turned aside and do harm, or be stopped, so that in that particular direction it could go no farther.

The most important thing, which all children were taught, was the relation between themselves and other people. There were Five Relationships (just as there were Five Virtues) to which every man must be true. These were the relation between parent and child, between husband and wife, between ruler and subject, between older brother and younger brother and between friend and friend. If everyone were true to these five, then truly there would be no unhappiness in the world. If friends are faithful and helpful to each other; if the elder brother protects and guides the younger, and if the younger brother respects and obeys the elder; if the subject is loyal to his ruler and the ruler's first thought is to care for his people; if wife and husband live together in perfect harmony, like the Yang and the Yin in the universe; if the child honors and serves his parents and the parents cherish their child, where is there any room for evil doing? These five loyalties were to the Chinese what the Ten Commandments were to the Jews and the last one I have mentioned was the most important. For if the son truly honors his parents, he will do nothing wrong, since that would bring sorrow and shame upon them, but he will always do his best, in order to give them pride and joy in him. This commandment has held the Chinese people together from Yao's time until today, and has had much to do with the amazingly long life of their nation.

Then there was the relation between men and the spirits of nature. Besides all the things and creatures that we can see, the Chinese believed that there were higher beings than man. Just as they knew that the animals and trees and stones were less intelligent than they were, so they believed that there were many spirits and gods, more intelligent and spiritual than man, whom we cannot see, and who have their place in the government of the universe. These gods were vassals of Heaven, like the feudal lords on earth, and each had his appointed task. They were given no names and no image was formed of them.

There was the sky, the material Heaven, with its Gods of rain and thunder, the sun, moon, and the planets ; there was the Earth, the mother of all things ; the four seasons, in whose regular return and in whose gifts the Chinese saw the Way made very clear ; the gods of the land and the grain, to whom they prayed for good crops in the spring, and whom they thanked after the harvest ; there were the mountains who stood guard over the land and controlled flood and earthquake, and the rivers whose mysterious, ceaseless flowing through the land gave them water for the fields and highways to travel on. Spirits guarded the roads and the gates of cities, and there were five guardians of the home : the god of the gate, the path, the door, the court and the kitchen. And since all things had their opposites, there were evil spirits, too, that could do great mischief.

A right relation was kept between men and all these spirits of nature, very much as it was kept between men, by respect and courtesy. Since the gods were superior to men, homage must be paid to them and offerings made to them. The seasons must be greeted, when they came, like honored guests, the mountains must be visited, the high gods must be wor-

shipped and thanked at regular times. The sun and the moon rose and set at their proper times, very beautifully ; the seasons came, each in its turn and each with its own beauty ; so men, too, must live in an orderly and a beautiful way. If they did, they would be happy and at peace. Their harmony would spread to the animals and birds and all other creatures, even to the earth and the waters, and all of life would be like some tremendous music in which nothing was out of tune. This was what the world was meant to be, said the ancient kings and wise men, and so it could be, if men would understand and obey.



SINCE the king was the high priest and must set the example of right living to all the people, it was his first duty to keep this right relationship between men and all spiritual beings. You can understand why he depended so much on a wise Prime Minister and on his other councillors when you realize how much of his time was given to his priestly duties. Some of these he alone performed in the name of all the people. Just as, on the night of the winter solstice, he worshipped Heaven, so, on the longest day of the year, which we call the summer solstice, he worshipped Earth. Early in March he went out of the eastern gate of his capital to meet the spring and in June he opened the southern gate to pay homage to the summer ; in the autumn he greeted the season at the western gate, and in winter at the northern.

In spring, when the frost was out of the ground, he drove with his courtiers to a field that was near his capital, and there he set the example to all the farmers in the kingdom

by plowing with his own hands two or three furrows in the earth. Then his ministers each plowed a few more furrows, and the work was finished by his attendants. This field was called the field of God, and the grain raised upon it was used only for sacrifice. In the same way, the queen with her maidens went forth to the mulberry groves and picked leaves for the young silkworms and fed them and cared for them with her own hands, in order to encourage all the women in the kingdom to do the same. The silk from these worms was used for ceremonial robes and for gifts that were offered to the gods.

The king must worship the great mountains and rivers, the gods of the land and the grain, all the spirits of the sky, and the five gods of the house. His life was a round of ceremonies, whose colors and music were fitted to the season or the spirit that was worshipped. When he sacrificed to Heaven, for instance, he and all his court wore robes of blue, and the offerings were burned, so that they would rise into the sky ; but when he sacrificed to Earth, the robes were yellow, and all the offerings were buried in the ground.

He must also set the example of courtesy to all his feudal lords. At stated times he received them at his court, feasted them, reviewed their chariots and their armies, and gave great hunting parties in his parks. There were also archery contests, held on the royal range, which was ninety bow-lengths long, and all of these events were a part of his duty and of the ordered life of his realm.

The archery contests were held with all the splendor and color that the Chinese loved so well, and the shooting was done to music. The archer must not only hit his mark but he must loose his arrow when the right note was sounded on the bells or the flutes. And archery meant more than mere

skill in shooting. The archer was supposed to see in the target his own character. The bull's eye was the character of the perfect prince. As he fitted his arrow to the string, he thought, "How near do I come to being a perfect prince?" And he shot to prove, not only his skill, but his worth. So it was with each man who picked up his bow, whether he were prince or king or minister. And the king, watching his vassals, noticed their bearing, their understanding of music, their rhythm, and their shooting. Through these he judged their character and gave special honor to those who did well. The winners were often invited to take part in the sacrifice which the king must offer, each season, in the ancestral temple of his dynasty; for he set the example to every family in his kingdom, and must keep the Five Relationships perfectly.

The ancestral temple was the most important and beautiful part of a king's palace. Heaven and earth and all the gods were worshipped out of doors, on open altars; they could not live nor be contained indoors. But ancestors had once been human beings and the services to them were family reunions, held in homely fashion, under a roof. At least once every season there was a sacrifice. All the members of the family who were near came to it and, in the king's household, the worthiest ministers and princes were chosen to take part. Let us watch the ceremony in the temple of an ancient king.

For a week before, the king and his family fasted, and meditated about their parents or the ancestors whom they were going to honor. They recalled those persons' looks and ways, remembered what they liked or disliked, and what food they preferred. By the day of sacrifice, it seemed as if the dead were living again, so clear was the picture in their minds.

Early in the morning all assemble to prepare the feast. The

women have gathered fragrant herbs and prepared the food ; they busy themselves with the sauces and the wines and cakes. The king himself goes out of the gate of the temple and leads in the young bull that is to be offered in sacrifice. It is a perfect animal that has been kept and fed carefully for months for this purpose. It is tied to a post in the courtyard and the king himself, with a knife whose handle is hung with bells, kills it. Other men flay it and cut it up and roast or broil its flesh.

When everything is ready, wine is poured out upon the ground so that its fragrance may call the spirits of the dead to the feast, or music is played for the same purpose. Often there is an elaborate dance to the music of flutes and drums and stringed instruments. In the Shang dynasty, the dance might show the victory of Tang over Kieh or some such event. This also is to give pleasure to the spirits.

Then all assemble in the ancestral hall, quietly and reverently, and there certain members of the family are sitting who have been chosen to represent the dead. They are called personators of the dead, and for the moment they forget themselves entirely and sit very still and solemn, for the unseen spirits are supposed to come and live in the persons of these representatives for this day. The food and the wine are offered to them by the head of the family, and as the old books say, the spirits quietly come and receive the gifts. The ancestors (perhaps the parents of the people who are sacrificing) are supposed really to be present there with them, although of course no one can see them, and everyone acts as if he realized it, quietly and happily enjoying their company. When the spirits have been feasted, the cups of wine are passed among the guests, who bow and smile to each other. Then the master of ceremony says to the head of the family, "Your sacrifice

has been fragrant and the spirits have enjoyed your meat and your drink. They give you a hundred blessings just as you desire. You have been correct and careful, you have shown your devotion. They will give you thousands and thousands of good things."

Then the bells and the drums sound. The personators of the dead rise and go out, and, it is said, the spirits peacefully return to the heavens. The women and the servants take the food into the adjoining dining-hall and there all the family and the guests feast together happily, while the musicians play to them. Each person is seated carefully according to his rank. Everyone eats and drinks all he desires, even to the servants who have helped in the preparations. When the feast is over, the guests and relatives bow to their host and say, "The spirits enjoyed your food and will give you long life. They will bless you with gray hair and wrinkled face. May your sons and grandsons do as you have done, in every season."

Not only once every season, but when any important event took place, sacrifice was made to the ancestors; they were told what was to be done and their blessing was asked. Yao presented Shun in the ancestral temple when he wished to make him king, and Shun, when he became king, sacrificed first to God and then to his ancestors. And so everyone throughout the kingdom, when he undertook any journey or enterprise, knelt before his ancestors, touching his head to the ground, telling them what he intended to do and asking for their protection. In families that were not wealthy enough to have a temple, the ancestral shrines were put in a special hall in the house and worshipped there; in humble huts that could not spare the space, they were given the place of honor in the family's meeting room. The most important reason for

a man to do well in the world was to bring honor to his ancestors and the greatest shame was to bring them sorrow.

A feudal prince must follow in the footsteps of the king, and observe the ceremonies in his own province. He, too, plowed three furrows in the spring, and greeted the seasons at the city's gates. He paid his homage to the spirits of the land over which he ruled, at the proper time and with due reverence, with music and dancing, and alas, always with the sacrifice of animals, which were killed, and either burned or offered as food to the spirits. When a king made a tour of inspection, he could tell, as soon as he entered a province, whether its prince observed the ceremonies or not. If he saw that the people were courteous to each other and did not quarrel, that the old people were well fed and did not carry burdens on the roads, that the grain grew richly and the rivers kept to their courses, then he knew, even before he saw him, that their prince was ruling according to the Li.

They say that in Kieh's time, when the whole country was upset and unhappy (for Kieh, as you know, cared little for the Li) Tang never forgot his duties or erred in his behavior. He noticed, however, that a neighboring prince did not perform the sacrifices as he should. So Tang sent a messenger to that prince asking why the ceremonies were neglected and reminding him of their importance. His neighbor answered, "I have no animals for the sacrifice." So Tang sent him sheep and oxen, but the prince, instead of offering these at his altars, ate them up. Tang overlooked this, but later sent another messenger asking again why he made no sacrifice. The prince replied, "I have no grain to fill the sacred vessels." So Tang sent him cartloads of wheat and millet. The prince put these in his granaries and used them himself. Then Tang

saw that he was not fit to rule, and when he defeated Kieh and became king himself he took the territory away from that prince and gave it to another.

For remember that I am telling you the plan and the vision. It was not always carried out. The Black-haired People did not live up to their high vision any better than other races have lived up to theirs, or any better than you or I live up to what we know is right. There are always some people who obey the vision they have seen, and there were such people in China all the time, but there are many who do not, and because of them the plan cannot be carried out.



IN THE FAMILIES of educated people there was not much religious ceremony beyond the regular worship paid at their ancestral shrines and to the gods of the house and the gate. But every act of life, everything that they did all day long, was a part of the Li, and they lived with far more courtesy and form than we in the West ever dream of. For it was through politeness and kindness that the Way of Heaven could flow undisturbed through human life. Each person spoke humbly of himself and praised all that belonged to another. I never could tell you all the rules of behavior that there were, for family life, for mourning, for receiving guests, for differences of rank, for official occasions and for a thousand other things.

Bowing was very important, for everyone bowed in greeting another person, and there were many different kinds of bows. The least bow of all was when one clasped one's own hands

together and bowed from the waist. To a more honorable person one bowed low from the hips, and repeated the bow twice, perhaps ; to a still more honorable person one knelt on both knees. The highest bow of all was the one which everyone must make in the presence of the king and before one's ancestors and the gods. The king did it also before his ancestors and the gods. One must kneel down with one's hands on the ground, bend forward and touch one's head three times to the ground and then rise ; kneel again, touch one's head to the ground three times, and rise ; kneel a third time, touch one's head to the ground three times, and rise. This was the kotow, "the three kneelings and the nine knockings."

Things, as well as people and gods, had their part in the Li. Because the Tao, and the Yang and the Yin, were everywhere, the Chinese saw in everything a meaning that we do not see. I could never tell you all these meanings, but I will tell you a few. The south was the most honorable direction, because it received most of the sun's rays and the sun is Yang. Therefore all important buildings and all ancestral temples faced south ; the ruler faced south when he received his subjects and the host faced south when he received his guests. The east was more honorable than the west, because the sun rose there, and so when a host sat facing south, he placed his most honored guest at his left, since that was east, and not at his right, as we do. Each direction had its color—south was red, east blue, north black and west white, and the center was yellow. Each season had its color and its direction—summer red, spring blue, winter black and autumn white, and the king dressed in the season's colors and met each in its right direction when he greeted them at the city gates.

The colors stood also for the Five Virtues, and so did the

five notes of music. The Chinese were never far from music and it was played to remind them of the harmony of life. The lute and the flute were two instruments that they loved to play. Men wore a pendant of jewels hanging from their girdles. They were made of jade or other precious stones which struck together and rang with a pleasant sound as the men walked. Bells were fastened to the bits of chariot-horses, and made a gay noise as their owners drove abroad. In the same way their dress and their food, their houses and their gardens, were all planned according to the Li, to make a harmony between Heaven and Earth and Man.

For the multitudes of the people, the farmers and the workmen, the ceremonies of life were very simple. If they honored their parents, bringing them their food in the morning, caring for them when they were old ; if they offered their gifts of millet and rice and scallions to the god of their fields and to the kitchen god at home ; if they sacrificed to their ancestors either in their houses or in the temple of their clan, that was enough. The worship of the higher gods was done for them by the officers of the government, who were the only priests. Their part in life was like everyone else's ; to be true to the Five Relationships, to live at peace with each other, to love their families and their work.



AND WHAT part did the children play in this plan of life ? They were a very important part of it, but when they were little, they tumbled about and cried and played and shouted

very much as they pleased. When they were nine or ten, they must begin to consider other people, and to learn their manners, and to obey and serve their elders. At cock-crow they got up, washed and dressed and went in to bow to their parents and to ask them how they were. When they were older, they took their parents' food to them before they had their own breakfast, and bowed to the elders of the family. They were taught that age was to be honored more than anything else, and they were told stories about children who loved their parents and brought honor to their ancestors.

There was once a little boy named Hiang, whose mother had died when he was very little, so that he had only his father to care for. It was his joy to serve him. On hot summer nights when it was hard to sleep, Hiang would get up and fan his father's bed and pillows to cool them, and in the cold winter, when the snow lay heavy on the roof, Hiang would slip first into the bed and warm the chilly bed-clothes with his body so that his father would have a comfortable place to sleep.

There was another boy named Meng, whose parents were very poor, too poor to buy mosquito nets for their bed. When they lay down tired from working all day long, the mosquitoes stung them cruelly and would not let them sleep. They bit Meng, too, who was only eight years old, but he did not drive them away. He threw the bed-clothes off him so that they would all come to him and leave his father and mother alone. And he whispered to the mosquitoes, "I am not afraid of you, and you need not fear me. I have a fan but I will not strike you with it, nor kill you with my hands. Come and bite me all you like."

These boys understood the Li, and took their place in the divine order.



CHAPTER 5

THE CHOU DYNASTY [1122-255 B.C.]

THERE were no men who honored and kept the Li so well as the family of Chou,* who lived in their feudal domain on the Wei River in Shensi. One of their ancestors had been a wise Minister of Agriculture under Yao and Shun. Another ancestor of theirs, whom they called the Ancient Duke, had once lived farther north in a rather wild and distant part of the same province. The Tartar tribes, forever roaming on the western borders of the kingdom, troubled the industrious Chinese, and attacked and stole from them. "They want your riches and your stores of grain," said his advisors to the Ancient Duke. "Then we will give those things to them," said the Duke and he let the Tartars take what they wanted. But these fierce people were not satisfied and attacked Chou again in order to take the land itself. The Duke's people were furious and prepared to fight, but the old man said, "The people are willing to fight for me and my land. But what difference does it make whether we or our enemies possess it? I cannot bear to have the men and the sons of the men over whom I rule, killed in battle." So he gathered his family and his goods together and moved

* Chou rhymes with blow.

southward to a safer place, where he built a strong city with a protecting wall. The people all followed him and his rule was so just and so mild that people came to him from other districts and his small domain of Chou became famous for wise and strong government.

The Shang Dynasty had lasted over six hundred years. Nothing remarkable had happened. Many lives, good and bad, had passed unrecorded; there had been able kings and weak ones, fine ministers and treacherous ones. The kingdom had grown and the feudal states had become more firm and self-reliant. The people had become more skillful in their work, and had learned new arts. The power and luxury of a throne to which rich tribute is brought from every quarter, are very tempting, and during the last two or three centuries the kings had fallen into idleness and pleasure again. This went from bad to worse until the story of Kieh repeated itself. There was a king named Chow Sin who was just as bad as Kieh, and who strangely enough, was also married to a beautiful and wicked woman. It was she who ran the kingdom for her pleasure, and the Chinese say that when the hen takes it upon herself to crow in the morning, the house will go to ruin.

As the King's cruelties and wickedness increased, the people turned against him, knowing that Heaven could not support such a king as he was. And as they looked for a leader, their thoughts naturally turned to the little state of Chou, which had been producing fine men for many generations.

At this time, in about 1125 B.C. Duke Wen, who was known as the Chief of the West, was ruling Chou, and among his ten sons there were two very fine men, Fa and Tan. Wen was a scholar and a philosopher, a student of astronomy as well as a wise prince. He honored old people and took tender care

of children, he was humble to the wise and he loved brave men. Therefore the wise and brave came to his court, and his power and his fame grew. One time two neighboring districts had a quarrel about their boundaries, and they decided to send representatives to Wen, and let him judge between them. When these men came into his state, on their way to his court, they noticed that everyone was happy, that none of the farmers quarreled about the boundaries of their fields, and that if two people met each other on the road, each stepped aside to let the other pass. Everywhere they saw that old people were honored, and treated with love and deference. Before they had gone very far, they said to each other, "Here in Wen's kingdom, people do not quarrel, and they will despise us for doing so. Why should we go farther? We shall only be shamed." So they turned around and went back home, and settled their quarrel as they went.

One of the King's councillors said to him, "The Chief of the West adds perfection to perfection and virtue to virtue. Everyone looks toward him. This bodes ill for you." So Chow Sin, on some pretext, threw Duke Wen into prison. His people ransomed him with beautiful gifts and he was set free. Before he left the capital, he persuaded the King to give up one of his most cruel punishments. Chow Sin used to have a great fire kindled, and over it he hung, lengthwise, a column of metal, which was greased. When he wanted to put a man to death, he made him walk the greased column. The man's efforts to keep his feet amused the Queen, and when he fell into the fire, she clapped her slender hands and laughed. Wen offered the King a part of his domain if he would stop this punishment, and the King agreed. Wen had not wasted his time in prison, for he had written a book on

philosophy which has been of immense value to scholars in China ever since.

Wen was a very old man in Chow Sin's time, but the people knew that his sons were worthy of him and they all besought Fa to put an end to the dynasty of Shang. Eight hundred princes and chiefs came to him and offered their help, and Fa consented at last. After Wen had died, he attacked Chow Sin, defeated him in battle and was proclaimed the Son of Heaven. He was called Wu Wang, the Warrior King. His younger brother Tan was his right-hand man, and he had wise advisors, who had been his father's ministers. "Now that I have defeated Shang," he asked one of them, "what shall I do to the people?" "I have heard," answered the minister, "that those who love men, protect even their houses, but that those who hate men, destroy the roofs over their heads." "Leave each man in peace," begged his brother. "All they want is to return to their houses and their work." So Wu Wang turned his war-horses into the pasture, and set his oxen free, and turned to the difficult task of putting a disordered kingdom to rights. It was the same task that Tang had had six hundred years before.

One night his brother came to his room late, and found him still at work at state affairs. "Why do you not go to bed?" he asked. "I cannot yet," replied Wu Wang. "The rulers of Shang did not please God. For years the wild deer have run at will over the tilled fields of the kingdom. Now I have punished Shang, and I am king, but I am not yet sure whether I am pleasing God and have His protection. I must punish the wicked; I must seek out and employ the wise and the good. How can I find time to sleep?"

Only two years after he had become king, before the coun-

try was settled and at peace, Wu Wang fell very ill, and his life was in danger. His death would have been a great misfortune, just at that time. Tan, who is better known as the Duke of Chou, prayed to his ancestors—his father Wen, his grandfather and his great-grandfather—for the King's life. He raised three altars to them, and knelt before them, facing north. "Your chief descendant," he said, "is suffering from a dangerous illness. If you three kings in Heaven are watching over him, I pray you to take my life instead of his. I can be more useful to you in Heaven than he can; but he has been appointed here on earth to be ruler of this great kingdom and the people love and revere him. Oh, do not let them lose their king, but take my life instead." He took the great tortoise shells, by which the future was read, and found there a favorable answer to his petition. He wrote his prayer on bamboo-tablets and locked it away in a box in the ancestral temple, which contained the record of acts that were performed in times of great misfortune. Then he returned to the palace without telling anyone what he had done. The next day Wu Wang was better and he soon recovered.

Gradually, by fighting and by just and wise government, the Kingdom became peaceful. One of the first things that Wu Wang did was to establish schools in his capital. There had been schools a long time before this, but he built new ones, three for young boys and three for older students. Any boy, rich or poor, could go there when he was eight years old, and if he was ambitious he could go through the college. He was taught the ceremonies and he studied literature, music, mathematics, archery and charioteering. From these colleges Wu Wang planned to choose his ministers and his officers, and he sent his own sons there.

Then he and the Duke of Chou made a plan of govern-

ment, and that plan was so good that it lasted for three thousand years. Whatever rebellions and wars there were in later centuries, each dynasty that came into power used the plan of government that had been made by the Founders of Chou.

They did not change very much ; the king had the same power that he had always had, but after this, instead of having many ministers, he had just six. These were the Prime Minister, who was the king's chief advisor and who was responsible for all the departments of the government, a very important person ; the Minister of Instruction, whose work it was to teach the people how to make the best use of their land, and who collected the taxes ; the Minister of Ceremony, who made and issued the calendar each year and supervised the ceremonies all through the kingdom ; the Minister of War, who was responsible for the defense of the country, and who also made a census of the people and called them out either for war or for public work ; the Minister of Crime, who had charge of justice and punishment ; and lastly, the Minister of Works, whose duty was to provide for all public constructions, such as roads, canals, walls, bridges and so forth.

Under each of these ministers there were countless other officers, for the government was very carefully organized. There were inspectors of mountains, forests, rivers, metals ; there were historians, map-makers, diviners, magicians, interpreters of dreams ; there were officers of music, dance and marriage ; everything in the kingdom seemed to have an official to look after it. All of these officers were chosen, not from the warriors or noble families, as was done in so many other countries, but from the scholars, the learned men who knew the history and the religion of their country. Any government position, from the Prime Minister down, was open to any man, no matter how poor or humbly born he might

be. Schooling was easy to get, and Wu Wang's school in his capital was free to everyone.

The princes in their feudal provinces copied the royal government. Each had his six ministers, his many officials, and his schools. It was the duty of all rulers to look through their lands for men of fine minds and characters, and to employ them in the service of the state.

Each province was divided into counties, each county into districts, each district into villages, and each village into hamlets made up of twenty-five families. The districts, counties and provinces had their magistrates or governors, the villages and hamlets had their headmen chosen from among the people, while the foundation of it all was the family, united and obedient, with its elder at its head. The whole country was called "The Middle Kingdom," because the Chinese believed, very naturally, that it was in the middle of the earth ; they also called it lovingly, "The Flowery Land."



Now Wu had not ruled for many years before he died, leaving the throne to his young son Cheng, with the Duke of Chou as his guardian and regent. The Duke was given this position because of his wisdom and his splendid character, but he had elder brothers who thought that the position should have been given to one of them, and who were jealous of his power. Before long they started rumors about him at court, saying that he never intended to let the young king rule, but was going to take the throne himself. They did not dare to say

this openly, but whispered it from one to another behind his back. Finally the rumor reached the King, and he was foolish enough to suspect his great uncle, who was managing the kingdom magnificently in Cheng's name. The Duke of Chou also heard the rumors, but paid no attention to them until he saw that his nephew was beginning to believe them. Then he did what a noble Chinese would do: he did not try to defend himself, but simply left the court, went to his estates in Lu and lived there in retirement, studying philosophy and astronomy, adored by his people. He kept an eye, however, on his brothers at court, anxious lest they should do more mischief than they had already done.

One autumn, about two years after this, when the crops stood thick and ripe in the fields, there was a terrific rain storm which laid the yellow grain flat in the fields and felled tall trees. The King and his ministers hurried to the ancestral temple to ask for help, and they opened the box which contained the prayers recorded in time of calamity. The first one they found was the prayer of the Duke of Chou for the recovery of Wu Wang! Of course, when they read that, they knew that the Duke had never wanted the throne for himself. The King wept and said, "We need not look further for the cause of this storm. Heaven sent it to show us the great virtue of my uncle. Now I, the little child, will go and ask him to come back to us." So he went over to Lu, and humbled himself before his uncle and asked him to be his minister and to return to the court.

Cheng Wang proved to be worthy of his heroic ancestors, and with the help of the Duke of Chou and other wise councillors, he continued his father's work. "Heaven," he said, "did a farmer's work when it uprooted Shang. How could I dare not to complete the work on my fields?" In the

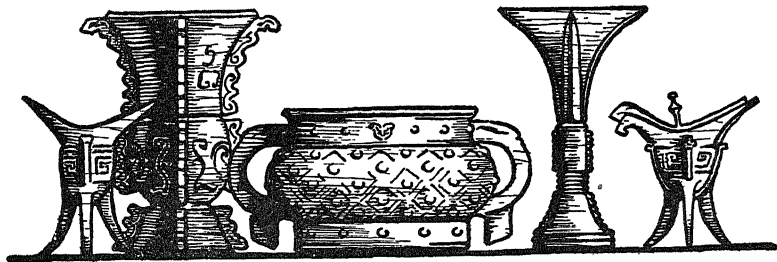
early years of his reign, an embassy came from the south, from Cochin-China, a country that the Chinese knew only by hearsay. They brought gifts of ivory, and a white pheasant, which was a great rarity. "Why have you come here?" the King's officers asked them as they presented their gifts. "For the last few years," they answered, "there have been no disasters in our country, no tempests and no undue rains, no drought nor tidal wave. We have asked our wise men the reason and they say that Heaven is showing a special favor, and that a wise king must be ruling somewhere in the world. We have heard that he is ruling here and we come to offer our homage."

Now when it was time for these men to return to their country, they confessed that they were not sure how they could find their way back. So when they left, the Duke of Chou took them into the courtyard of the palace and gave them chariots for their journey. On the front of each chariot stood a tiny iron figure of a man with his hand stretched out. This hand always pointed south and did not change its direction no matter how the chariot was turned. This is the first news we have of the compass, which was invented by the Chinese in very early times, though we do not know exactly when or by whom it was done. Our western ways sometimes seem the exact opposite of Chinese ways, and it is characteristic of this difference that the Chinese made their compasses so that they pointed south, and that, whereas we first used them on the sea, they used them on land.

Cheng Wang and Cheng's son were both excellent kings, and during their reigns the land was at peace. The princes made their regular visits to the capital, and tribute was brought from far and near. The schools were well attended and many

books were written, on poetry, philosophy and magic, and on practical matters like farming. History had been written since the earliest times, for each dynasty and each feudal state kept a record of everything important that happened. These were written down truthfully and no ruler was allowed to see what was recorded during his own reign. Scholars, like ministers, had a high sense of honor.

In the feudal state of Tsi, near Shantung, a general once murdered his Duke. The historian (for each state kept its records just as the royal dynasty did) wrote down on his tablets, "General Tsui murdered his ruler." The general heard of this and had the historian put to death, appointing his brother in his place. He asked the brother what he intended to write about the murder. "I shall record the event exactly as it happened," answered the new historian. The general was furious and had him put to death also. A third brother (for they were a family of scholars) was appointed and was asked the same question. "I shall write the truth," he answered, "and I shall also have to record the fact that you have put to death two of the state historians." The general gave up. He saw that his name was getting blacker and blacker, and that there was no way of escaping history. Perhaps he acted more carefully after that. Who knows?



THERE WERE many industries in China now. Gold and silver, iron, copper and precious stones were mined. In the towns and in the palaces of kings and princes there were many skillful craftsmen. Armorers and chariot-makers supplied weapons and chariots both for war and for ceremony, decorating their work with gaily colored silk and painted leather. Fine woods were chosen for musical instruments, and were delicately carved with the forms of birds and animals ; careful fletchers made bows and arrows, fashioning them of strong wood and of horn, binding them with glue and sinew, winding them with green silk. A bow must be made to suit the man who used it ; a short, stout man must have one kind of bow, and a tall, strong man another kind ; a quick, hasty man must have a firm, steady bow, and a slow man must have one that was swift and elastic. So careful were they in their work. There were bell-makers and bronze-founders, workers in leather and silk, jewelers and carvers of jade, and many other workmen such as potters, masons, carpenters and so forth.

It is a curious thing that almost no early Chinese art has lasted to our day, although the Black-haired People have always been lovers of beauty and have been artists ever since their civilization first began. They did not build in stone, as the Egyptians did ; in early times they used earth that was stamped down to make it harder, and even during the Chou dynasty, they built only with brick and wood, which were easily destroyed. So, although we hear that there were paintings at that time, none of them remain, and no sculpture. The only things we have that show us the art of those days are some splendid bronze vases, covered with intricate design, and some pieces of jade.

These vases* were used in the sacrifices. They were often made in memory of some great event or as a thank-offering for some favor of Heaven, and they were offered and kept in the ancestral temples. The outside of the vase was filled with the most interesting design, and on the inside was often written, in raised letters, the reason why it had been cast.

"I, Chui, belonging to the royal clan, remember often, with veneration and compassion, my ancestors who died in battle for the service of the king. I now offer them this vase as a token of my filial love. May they give me life and prosperity. Made by me, Chui, to be the jewel of my family."

"The Son of Heaven, being about to wage war against the Marquis of How, asked me to curse the rebels. So I, Chin, made with my hand the condemning gestures and pronounced with my mouth the curse. The king, therefore, gave me a hundred bars of copper as a reward. I have used the royal gift to make this vase, which I present to my ancestors with the usual offerings."

It was probably the court magician who wrote that. A king, coming back from a war where he had won much booty, offered a sacrificial vase on which he wrote, "There was some fine copper among the spoils. The King ordered it to be melted and cast in the form of a tripod, to be the jewel of his sons and grandsons."

Among all the materials that they used, the Chinese loved jade the best. Jade is a smooth, cool stone, which is usually of a whitish or soft green color, although yellow, red, black and violet jade is also found. That which is most prized is the pure white, which looks like lard, and the emerald green; this kind is kept in king's palaces and we rarely see it in the

* See the picture of them on page 69.

West. When jade is carved and polished, it is very smooth and shining, like wax, and very pleasant to touch. If you strike two pieces of it together, they give a musical sound. The Chinese love it for these qualities, and also because, to them, it stood for certain things that they admired very much.

One of the pupils of the great sage, Confucius, asked him once, "Master, why is it that wise men value jade more than other stones? Is it because it is rare and other stones are common?"

Confucius answered, "It is not because jade is rare that it is so highly valued. It is because, ever since the olden days, wise men have seen in jade all the different virtues. It is soft, smooth and shining, like kindness; it is hard, fine and strong, like intelligence; its edges seem sharp but do not cut, like justice; it hangs down to the ground, like humility; when struck, it gives a clear, ringing sound, like music; the stains in it, which are not hidden and which add to its beauty, are like truthfulness; its brightness is like Heaven, while its firm substance, born of the mountains and the waters, is like the Earth. The *Book of Poetry* says, 'When I think of a wise man, he seems to me like jade.' That is why wise men love jade so much."

They thought of it almost as a living thing. They believed that there was a kind of jade that kept cool, no matter how hot the temperature might be, and another kind that kept warm no matter how cold the weather. If it was found in mountains, they thought that those mountains were more thickly forested than others; if it was found in rivers, their water was more fertilizing than others; it was even ground into powder and used for medicine. It was carved into all sorts of ornaments and vases; girdle-pendants were made of it, hair-pins and ear-rings; bowls were made for the kings' and the

nobles' use and vases for the sacrificial offerings. Yet you would never believe, if you saw these delicate ornaments, these bowls cut so thin that the light shows through them, that jade is harder than iron. No tool can break it and no chisel can cut it. How then, you may ask—as you look at the work of later centuries, at the open-work carving, the vases with figures of dragons curling over the brims, and the little trees whose leaves and flowers are cut from different colored jade—how then are these things made?

Jade can be cut only with saws or drills. It is first cut with an iron saw, whose edge is covered with moistened emery dust. The friction and the emery cut where the iron cannot. To hollow it out, drills must be used, also helped by emery or jewel dust, for jewels are the hardest things that we know, and when they are ground into powder and that powder is used on the edge of a saw or drill it will wear down the jade. The finer carving was done with tools that look like nails, the head being the part that cut. They were used very much as a dentist uses the tools with which he bores or polishes your teeth. But there was no electric power to turn the tools in those days; they were worked with a bow whose string was twisted around the upper part of the tool, so that when the bow was pulled back and forth, the tool was whirled around very swiftly. After the carving was done, the stone must be polished, first with a wooden polisher, then with a leather one, finer and finer jewel-dust being used until the surface had that brilliance that made it seem like virtue itself.

What labor and what patience it took to do this work! Ten years were sometimes spent in the making of one fine piece. Work was done in other materials just as devotedly; metal-work, wood carving, weaving, embroidery and pottery were made by the clever, patient hands of workmen who understood

the meaning of the materials they dealt with, and the purpose for which it would be used. Just as the farmer loved and cared for his land, so the craftsman loved his work, and for centuries he has filled the Middle Kingdom with workmanship as lovely as a fruit or a flower.

When there was peace in the land, the simple folk, the workman and the farmer, the boatman and the miner, were happy enough. It was really believed that the happiness of the people was the best proof of good government, and a prince or a governor was judged by the welfare of his territory. Besides, their work, especially farming, was thoroughly respected, and so they were rarely ill-treated. In the towns, the craftsmen had their guilds, like the guilds of mediæval Europe; there were festivals, plays, wandering singers and story-tellers to amuse them, and the busy round of family and town life.

In the country, each family raised enough for its own needs; its food, its hemp for rope and clothing, the bamboo that was used for everything from a house to a fishing-rod, the mulberry trees for its silkworms. Besides their own lands, between every group of families there was a public field, on which they all worked, and from which the taxes were paid. The farmers, too, had their spring and autumn festivals; they knew the joy of the returning birds and the springing grain, the summer showers and the rich reward of harvest, when they poured the white and yellow grain into their bins and their granaries. In the winter they repaired and built walls and dykes and buildings, made and mended tools, while the women wove the clothes for the coming seasons. When the day's work was over, they gathered around a story-teller in the market-place, or around the family elders at home, and listened to tales of ghosts and dragons, and of the clever foxes who know all the laws of magic and who are able to turn them-

selves into lovely maidens and do much mischief in the peaceful homes of men.

"Foxes live to be very, very old," the story-tellers said ; "they live in holes in the ground and they gather into themselves the power and the magic of the earth. They often live in tombs and talk with the spirits, and so they become very wise. When they are perhaps eight hundred or a thousand years old, they are able to turn themselves into human form. Sometimes they become graceful maidens, and then they turn their tails into little serving girls or into handsome petticoats, for their tails would betray them. They live for years among men and no one knows what they are. But they finally tire of human ways, and one day they vanish, and all that is seen of them is a bushy tail slipping around the corner of a wall.

"They can also take the shape of dignified old men and scholars. In a district that I know well, there was a group of young men who used to study every day with a teacher whom they respected very much. One day he disappeared and they could find no trace of him. A few years afterward, these young men were walking together in the country, and suddenly they came upon a circle of foxes who were all listening very attentively to an old fox who was teaching them. When the men appeared, all the foxes scampered away except the old one, who was not at all afraid, and when they drew nearer, behold, the old fox was their teacher who had disappeared years before!"

"Do foxes live forever ?" a listener asked.

"Some of the wisest of them," answered the story-teller, "draw such magic from the earth that they can make themselves immortal, and then they become fairy foxes with golden hair and nine tails. But many die. And when a fox feels that death is very near, he always travels back as quickly as he can

to the place where he was born. There he lies down at the foot of a hill, folds his paws and raises his head to Heaven, and so, with quietness and dignity, he breathes his last. If he cannot reach the place, he climbs a hill and dies looking toward his home. That is why, when a man has spent his life in the service of his country and comes back at a ripe old age to die in peace in his family home, we say that he has died a fox's death. Truly, the fox is a clever creature ; sometimes he brings blessings, but often he does great mischief."

This busy and contented life of town and village was sometimes broken into and sometimes quite destroyed by great misfortunes. There were three terrible things that might happen : one was flood, another was drought, and the third was war. The people hated war. Armies trampled down the growing grain and broke the dykes and took the farmers' animals and crops. Worst of all, the men themselves were called away from their homes and their work and sent to distant places to fight. They saw no glory and no excitement in this. "Good iron is not used for nails," they said grumblingly, "nor good men for soldiers. Who will reap the grain that we have sowed ? And who will care for our parents until we return ?"

Alas, the time was coming when there was to be war for hundreds of years ; when armies marched back and forth across the land, destroying the crops and drenching the soil with blood. For the kings of Chou were no better than the kings of Shang ; they forgot their high duty and lost the loyalty of their vassals, and the feudal princes tore the country to pieces in their greed and their desire for power.





CHAPTER 6

THE CHOU DYNASTY [1122-255 B.C.]

FEUDALISM is a fine form of government while there is a powerful king on the throne whose vassals are loyal to him, and while a country is still so small that the king can keep in close touch with all his nobles and they can easily reach his capital. But if the ruler is weak and the princes live far away, they are apt to think, "Why should we obey the king? We are like kings here on our own land; we can do as we like and need not serve him." Then a country is in danger of breaking up into separate little states, all probably quarreling with each other, and it gets into terrible disorder. Many countries, Egypt, China, Japan and Europe, have used the feudal system, and it is interesting to see how it worked out in each of them. You will see what trouble it led to in China.

The country was divided into many states and principalities, some large and some small. Some were far away on the borders of China, and were as large as good-sized kingdoms, maintaining armies, fighting against the savage tribes of the

border, governing themselves with little help from the capital. The kingdom was no longer concentrated about the elbow of the Huang-ho, with tributary provinces extending out from it. There were large states along the Yangtze River and in the eastern plains, border states in the western mountains and on the north in Kansu, Shansi, and Chihli. The princes who ruled these could not make the long journey to the king's court every year. Only the nearest ones did that, the next nearest came every two or three years, and those farthest away came every six years to report to their sovereign. And the king no longer made his visit to them every five years. The journey was too long and arduous. Cheng had been on the throne twelve years before he made a tour of his realm.

Now you can imagine that, when a weak or lazy or vicious king was on the throne, none of these visits were made, and that the feudal lords took things into their own hands and did very much as they pleased. They had a very pleasant time of it, each in his own domain. Each of them had his own capital, a tight-walled little city, in the middle of which stood his palace. In front of it, on the left, was his ancestral temple, on the right the open altar of the land and the grain, surrounded by a grove of trees. Behind the palace was the market-place, and all around it were the houses of the citizens. Outside the walls his wide lands stretched away as far as he could see, cultivated by farmers who brought him their taxes in grain and silk. Beyond in the wooded hills he had his hunting parks. If he wanted to add to his domain, he made war on any barbarous people who lived near him and took their land, or, if he was strong enough, he took some territory from his Chinese neighbors. If he was wise, he was free to develop his land and to rule his state as he thought right, with

no interference from his king. His life was a copy of the king's life : he rose at cock-crow to meet his ministers in the audience hall, he offered the sacrifices, he held hunting parties and feasts and archery contests, and occasionally he visited the royal capital.

When they came to court, these princes were a gay and a brave sight. Then the gates of their cities were flung open and they drove out in chariots drawn by four horses abreast. The prince stood at the front of his chariot, with his driver at his left and his minister at his right. The chariots were painted and their axles and shafts were bound with gaily-colored silk or leather ; the horses were proud and spirited, and the bells at their bits and foreheads rang merrily as they trotted or shook their heads. Each chariot carried its banner, bright with pictures of birds or serpents, turtles or dragons, with bells at the top of the flagstaff. The nobles wore robes of colored silk, often richly embroidered. These were simply cut and consisted of a straight skirt down to the feet, and a square-cut jacket with wide sleeves, bound at the waist with a girdle. In cold weather their jackets were lined with fox or leopard fur, or they used fur robes and put a silken jacket over them. They wore close-fitting caps, and during the Chou Dynasty, red shoes embroidered with gold, for red was the color of that dynasty. Jewels were worn on the cap and hanging from the girdle, in the ears and on the fingers. A carved piece of jade, carried in the hands or thrust in the girdle, showed the rank of each noble or officer.

If they came in time of war they wore armor of mail and plumed helmets. They carried bows that were tipped with ivory and bound with green silk, and their spears were hung with scarlet tassels. Around their chariots marched their

guards, behind them followed more chariots and the foot-soldiers, while last of all came the heavy wagons carrying provisions and equipment, drawn by slow oxen.

During the long centuries of the Shang dynasty, the princes had become more and more independent. Then, when Wu Wang overthrew Chow Sin, they all banded together with him and during his reign and Cheng Wang's reign they were loyal and obedient. But as the later kings of Chou grew weak or lazy, the nobles stayed in their own territories and strengthened them and paid very little attention to the throne. And when you hear about some of these later kings, you will easily understand why the princes stayed on their own domains.

There was one king who cared for nothing but hunting, and who rode over the farming lands and trampled down the grain in his wild pursuit of deer and boar. One time he had to cross a river, and a boat was built to carry him. When he was in the middle of the river, the boat came to pieces and he was dumped into the icy water, which was just what the makers of the boat intended. Another king loved to take long journeys, and once he went so far into the west that the people made up fairy tales about him and said that he had gone to see the goddess who lived in the Kuen Lun mountains, in whose gardens grew the magic peaches that gave everlasting life. But what became of the kingdom while he was so far away? The princes did not come to court and the Tartars raided the northern borders.

There was a king named Li Wang, who reigned in 878 B.C. He ruled strictly, but he punished harshly. He was greedy for money and appointed a dishonest and heartless Minister of Instruction, who levied heavy and unjust taxes and oppressed the people. There were five other ministers, however, and

one of these was honest and faithful. He came to the King and said, "The people cannot bear their misery. They are complaining about your government." "Are they indeed?" answered Li Wang. "I will see to it that their mouths are closed." He ordered his chief magician to bring him a list of all those who had spoken against him, and he had everyone put to death whose name was on the list. That was a very different method, was it not, from that of Yao and Yu, who hung tablets on the door of the palace, so that the complaints or advice of the people should be heard at once?

After so many men had been killed, of course nobody dared to say a word against Li Wang, but, as they passed on the streets and the roads, men looked into each other's eyes and each knew what the other was thinking. The next time Li Wang saw his wise minister he said, "Aha! I have stopped the mouths of the ones who talked about me! There is no more complaint now."

"What have you done?" answered his minister. "You have put up a barrier between you and your people, that keeps you from knowing their real feelings. But you ought to know that it is more dangerous to stop the people's mouths, than it is to stop the waters of a river. If you stop a river, it overflows and many lives are lost in the flood. People who take care of rivers keep the channels clear, so that the waters can flow freely, and rulers of men should likewise let their people talk perfectly freely. By the words of the people you can tell what is right and what is wrong in your government, but if you stop their mouths, how can a kingdom last?"

The minister was right, for three years afterwards, the people in a mob attacked the palace of the King, who had to flee for his life. His young son went for protection to the minister's

house, where he stayed until he was old enough to take his father's throne. Meanwhile the minister, and another who was as devoted as he, ruled well and wisely as regents.

The son, Suen Wang, who had been well taught by his regents, was a wiser king than Li had been, but he was not very strong. The Tartars entered his kingdom and he could not defeat them ; the princes quarreled and ruled unjustly and he could not control them. He grew discouraged and careless. He had a wise and gentle wife who tried to strengthen him.

We do not hear much about women in the early history of China, except bad ones, like Mei-hi. There was an old song which said :

*A clever man builds up a city,
A clever woman tears it down.*

Women were not supposed to appear in public, but to stay within the courtyards of their homes. A little girl was taught to be gentle and obedient, and skillful in sewing and cooking and all the household arts ; a young wife must serve her husband's parents and obey her mother-in-law. Yet, as wife and mother, she was much honored ; the care of the young children was entirely in her hands and she was often a helpful advisor to her husband. In her old age, when her husband's parents died, she often ruled the whole household and all the younger families bowed down to her. Many of the Chinese women were very lovely ; their smooth oval faces, their sparkling eyes and delicate eyebrows, their silky straight black hair, their graceful movements and their fingers "as slender as the young shoots of a plant" were much admired. Their beauty was increased by flowing silken garments of lovely colors, by jeweled or flowered head-dresses, and many ornaments.

When Suen Wang's wife saw that he grew careless and did not meet his ministers in the morning, she decided that something must be done. So one day, while he still lay abed, she told her servants to bring the curtained palanquin that ladies used when they left the house, and to carry her in it to her father's house. From there she wrote a letter to the King. "His Majesty's humble wife," she wrote, "is a worthless woman who has made His Majesty forget his duties, so that he arrives late at the Hall of Audience in the morning. She has made him delight in pleasure and neglect the Li, and this will surely lead to disorder in the Kingdom. She has therefore retired from the court and begs that His Majesty will be pleased to punish her." The King understood her immediately and asked her to return, promising to do better. So she meekly came back and he did do much better. But when there was trouble in one of the powerful states and murder was done, he knew that the duke of that state was stronger than he was, and that he could do nothing to punish him. He grieved so much over this and over the lawless state of the land that he fell ill and died of sorrow.

There was one king, about 780 B.C. who, by his own foolishness, lost the last bit of loyalty that the vassals might have had in their hearts. His name was Yu Wang, and a small state against which he had been fighting gave him as a peace-offering a very beautiful girl whose name was Pao-sse. Now Yu Wang was already married to the daughter of a powerful noble, and she was his rightful queen. A man could marry as many wives as he chose, but there was always one who was the principal wife, who stood beside him at the family sacrifice and whose sons should be his heirs. The other wives were of lower rank and were called concubines. Yu Wang was so delighted with the beautiful Pao-sse that he would not let her

be his concubine, but made her his queen, sending his first wife back to her father who, of course, was very angry.

Now although she was very lovely, Pao-sse very rarely smiled, and Yu Wang's greatest desire was to make her laugh. He had plays given, and dances ; his jugglers did tricks for her delight, but still her lovely face did not move. Finally Yu thought of a plan. On the highest hills beacons were always piled, so that at any moment the King could have them lighted, and his lords would gather their soldiers together, mount their war-chariots, and hasten to the capital ; for that was the signal that their sovereign needed them. Yu Wang had the beacons lighted, not because he needed any help, but because he wanted to see Pao-sse's face, when she saw the nobles coming for nothing.

The fires blazed to the sky, lighting up the country at night, and sending a column of smoke up through the air by day. The nearest nobles, thinking that there must have been some serious trouble, came post-haste, with their banners streaming, and the bells at their horses' bits ringing, and swept into the palace courtyards. When Pao-sse saw their earnest faces, and all the equipment of war they had prepared for nothing, she clapped her hands and burst into laughter ; and Yu Wang was happy, for he had pleased her. But he had not pleased his nobles, and they returned to their cities with their hearts full of anger and contempt.

Meanwhile the father of the rightful queen was planning revenge on this unworthy sovereign. He was a noble, and lived near the borders of China, and his neighbors were the wild tribes who lived beyond the borders. He promised them plunder and rich treasure, if they would help him. Then with them and his own men, he made an attack on the capital.

The King heard of the danger, and thought at once of summoning his vassals to help him. He commanded the beacon-fires to be lighted. Again the flames flared up to heaven, and the smoke rose to the clouds ; again the King waited—this time in grim earnest and anxiety—for his nobles to arrive. But no one came ; the princes were not going to be fooled again for the whim of a woman. The King was left defenseless, except for a few soldiers of his own, and the Queen's father, at the head of his Tartars, swept into the capital, attacked the palace, killed Yu Wang, plundered the treasury and carried Pao-sse into ignominious captivity.

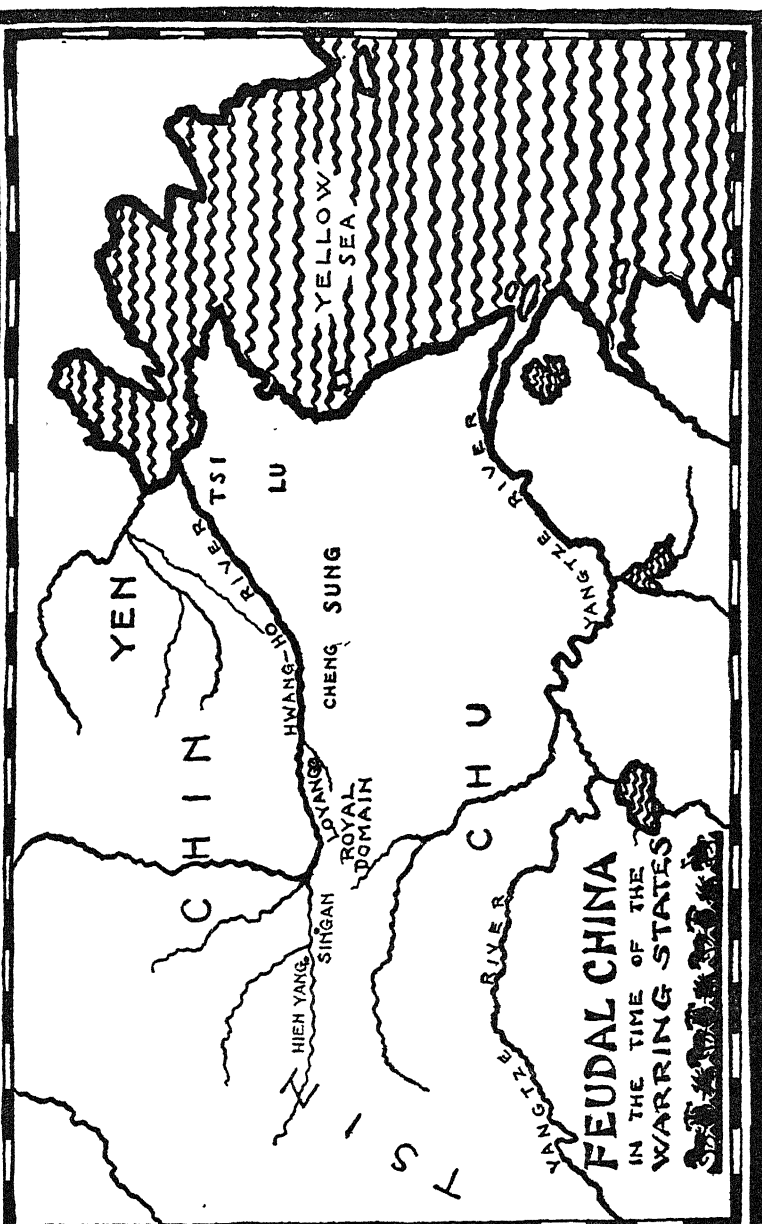
Yu's son, the next king, was hidden by his ministers during this trouble, and only regained his throne with the help of the powerful state of Tsin. He was so frightened by the memory of his father's death, and the attack of the Tartars on the capital, that he decided to move eastward to a safer city, where he would be farther away from the dangerous western tribes. There he set up his court, and gave the provinces that he had left to the Duke of Tsin, saying, "I give you these provinces on condition that you make them a barrier between me and the barbarians." By doing this he not only acknowledged that he was afraid, but that the Duke of Tsin was stronger than he. What respect could the people or the nobles have for such kings as these ? Alas, that the Kingdom of Wen and of Wu Wang had fallen into such hands !



AFTER that time, the Kings of China found themselves lords of a small state, which was called the Royal Domain, surrounded by other states most of which were larger and had stronger armies than the king's.* There were about twenty-one of these in the country, and among them were five whose princes were far more powerful than the king. In the east, over by Shantung, were Tsi and Sung; in the south, along the Yangtze River, was Chu, whose name, which means Bush-land, shows how wild it was; in the north, in Shansi, was Chin, and in the west was Tsin, which was also partly barbarous, for it bordered the outer lands where the Tartars lived. Over these the king had no control whatever. They fought with each other and with the smaller states, each trying to make itself more powerful than all the others.

Gradually, among the five great states, Tsin began to take the lead. It was a large territory over in the west, cut off from the rest of China by difficult mountain passes. Its people were skillful charioteers and breeders of horses, and they had learned a great deal from the wild tribes of Tartars with whom they were constantly fighting. For, although they fought against each other very often, there was a natural sympathy between the Tartars and the people of Tsin. They both loved animals, especially horses. The Dukes of Tsin boasted that one of their ancestors had helped the great Yu in his conquest of the Yellow River, and for this service Shun had made him keeper of his animals and birds, and he had bred and tamed many beasts for the great king. Another ancestor had been Tang's charioteer in his fight against Kieh, and still another had driven one of the kings of Chou on his famous journey to the western mountains. They had been rewarded with territories in the west and there they had built up a strong

* See the map on the opposite page.



and warlike state. It was to Tsin that Yu Wang's son had given his western provinces when he moved eastward to a safer place. Besides being brave and active, the people of Tsin were tricky, and would win by treachery where they could not win by force. They had conquered a great deal of Tartar territory and had intermarried with the wild tribes, so that there was Tartar blood in their veins.

Duke Mu of Tsin was a famous chieftain, and his long life was filled with adventures with the other states, particularly with his strong neighbor on the north, the state of Chin. One time the heir of Chin was driven by enemies from his home and fled to the Duke Mu's court for protection. "If you will help me to get back my territory," he said, "do you think that I would be so mean as to give you nothing? Put me on my throne and I will give you eight cities." Mu was delighted to help his neighbor, so he called out his army and put him back on his throne again. But he never heard anything more about the eight cities; all he received for his trouble was a message of thanks. Shortly after this, there was another appeal for help from Chin; there was a famine in their land and they begged Mu to send them some food from Tsin. After the Duke had treated him so badly, Mu did not know whether to send the food or not. He consulted his ministers.

"Make war upon Chin," advised one of them, "while it is weak with this famine."

"Send them the food," said another, "it will be the second time that you have helped the Duke, and sometime he must return your kindness and do something for you. If he does not show any gratitude, his people will be ashamed of him, and then you can defeat him easily if you ever make war against him."

"Misfortune," said the oldest minister, "falls upon everyone

in turn. If you help your neighbor when he is in trouble, you will be acting rightly and you will be blessed."

Mu followed the advice of the old man and sent so much food that there was a stream of wagons that reached from his capital to the capital of Chin. The next year, it was Tsin that suffered; there was a bad drought and the people starved. Duke Mu sent to Chin for help, but its hard-hearted ruler refused to send even a wagon-load of grain. This was too much for Mu. When his people had recovered from the drought, he made war on Chin and, as the second minister had foretold, he defeated it easily and took all of its territory that lay west of the Huang-ho.

At other times he was not so wise. The little state of Cheng, which lay about three hundred miles east of Tsin, asked him for help one time, and he sent his armies and saved it from its enemies. Afterwards, the Duke of Cheng begged that three of the generals of Tsin might stay with him, to train his army and to defend his city against further attack. Duke Mu consented and the three generals remained. After a few months, Mu received a message from one of the generals, which said, "I have been given charge of the northern gate of the capital city of Cheng. The key is in my hands. Send an army secretly and the city is yours." Again Mu consulted his ministers. The old man who had advised him before said, "It is hard to march three hundred miles across several states and still surprise anyone. Cheng will hear of your plan and you will tire out your army for nothing."

But the Duke would not listen and sent forth his army, under the command of his best generals, with banners streaming and horses prancing, to capture the little state that he had helped such a short time before. On the way, the army had to pass through the Royal Domain, and they should have

stopped there, made their obeisance to the King and told him what they were about to do. But the army of Tsin did not take the trouble to do this; for their Duke was far more powerful than the King. To be sure, as they marched past the wall of the royal capital, the officers dismounted from their chariots and walked on foot, their helmets in their hands, as a sign of respect, but they leaped quickly on again and marched ahead without stopping.

As they drew near to Cheng, they met an old man driving a dozen oxen toward the Royal Domain. He was a very clever old man, and he probably saved his state from destruction. He was really on his way to market to sell the oxen that he was driving, for Cheng had not heard that the army was coming and neither had he. But when he saw the mighty host approaching, he went to the generals, bowed low before them and said, "My master, the Duke of Cheng, has heard that you are coming. Although his land is poor, he sends you these few oxen as food for your army, and he has prepared more food and resting-places for you in his city."

The generals looked at each other. If the Duke of Cheng knew that they were coming, of course he would not leave the key of his city in the hands of the Tsin general. "Cheng is prepared," they said to each other, "there is no use in our going any farther." So they turned back, while the old man with his oxen hurried home to tell his lord what had happened. The generals of Tsin, however, were so angry at having come so far for nothing, that on their way back they stopped and captured a city that lay within the borders of their old enemy, the state of Chin. This infuriated the Duke of Chin, and he sent his army quickly ahead, waylaid the Tsin army in a dark mountain-pass, and totally defeated it, killing every man and taking the generals prisoners. Tsin never forgave and never

forgot this defeat, and the year after, sent out a better army and avenged it. They beat their enemy and destroyed the army, and that was the beginning of the downfall of Chin, for soon afterwards it was divided into three small states, and was never so dangerous a rival again.

I must tell you one more story about Duke Mu and the Tartars, for it could not have happened anywhere else but in China. There was a tribe of these wild folk living beyond his borders, and they were becoming too powerful to be pleasant neighbors. Mu sent spies among them, who discovered that a Chinese scholar was living in the Tartar camp and that he was their chief's most trusted adviser. This man had perhaps been banished from China or had wandered into the outer lands because he was disgusted with the Chinese ways; at all events, his teachings were making an orderly and powerful people out of the tribe he was living with. When Mu found this out, he was troubled.

"It is a dangerous thing for us," he said to his ministers, "to have a wise man in the camp of our enemies. Well-governed people are more to be feared than ill-governed ones. What shall we do?" His ministers thought it over. Finally one of them said, "The chief of the Tartars has never heard the music of the Middle Kingdom, for he lives far away. Let your Highness send musicians to him who can, with their melodies, take away the strength of his character and make him forget his duties. Invite his adviser here to visit you and keep him here as long as you can. Then if the music does its work, when he goes back he will find the chief weak and lazy, and he will not stay in the camp. Perhaps he will come back here and serve you instead."

"That is a good plan," said Mu, "we will try it." So he pretended to be very friendly toward the Tartar chief, sent him

two bands of skilled musicians as a gift, and invited his minister to visit the court of Tsin. When the scholar arrived, Mu treated him with great courtesy, gave him the seat of honor at his left, offered him delicious food from his own bowls and asked his advice about many things.

Meanwhile the musicians had traveled to the Tartar camp and were delighting the ears of its chief with far more lovely music than he had ever heard before. They had been told what sort of melodies to play, for the Chinese have always known that music has power over men. They played so well that the savage chief cared for nothing except to lie on the couch inside his big tent and listen to them all day long. His people, when they no longer felt his rule, or the wise guidance of his minister, became lawless and quarrelsome. Mu's plan worked perfectly. When the Chinese scholar, after a long visit in the orderly state of Tsin, came back to his Tartar master, he found him given up to pleasure, heedless of his duties, and the tribe in a turmoil. He resigned at once, told the chief what he thought of him, and returned to Duke Mu, offering him his services. Mu made him his trusted adviser and found out from him all about that particular tribe of Tartars. A year later he made war on them, defeated them and annexed their whole territory. In such ways as these, partly by force and partly by treachery, Tsin became the foremost state in China.





AND WHO were the Tartars, these wild folk who were beginning to take an important part in the history of China and whose attacks were becoming more and more dangerous? The Chinese were not alone in their part of the world; they probably called themselves the Black-haired People to show the difference between themselves and the barbarous tribes around them. There had always been wild peoples in the land, who did not try to cultivate their fields or to grow fruit and mulberry trees. Do you remember how, in Yu's time, they were taught to do these things and how they sent in their tribute of silk from their mountain trees? Many of them learned from the Chinese and became a part of the kingdom, and their chiefs were peaceful vassals of the king. This was true especially in the south and east, because there the land was fertile and they could become farmers; there, too, they were shut in between China and the sea, or between China and the great Yangtze River and it was easier to teach and to control them. They mingled with their conquerors and in every way became Chinese.

But on the north and the northwest it was very different.

Out there were fierce and warlike tribes who lived on horseback. They had all the vast continent of Asia to spread over and to grow in. They had the mountains to hide in, and the wide plains of Mongolia and Turkestan to gallop over when they were pursued. It was hard to lay one's hand on them. From them came later the hordes that devastated a large part of the civilized world: the Huns, the Turks and the Mongols. There were different races among them, but they were very much alike. The Chinese called them the Hiung-nu, but for convenience we will call them the Tartars, although the name is not entirely correct. Their character and their life were as different from those of the Chinese as you could ever imagine.

Their lands, part desert, part grassland, rising upward into the mountains, were not so fertile or so fitted for farming as the river-valleys and the coastal plains. They raised flocks and herds of cows, sheep and horses. They lived on milk and flesh and cheese and dressed themselves in the wool and leather and fur that they got from these and other animals. People who keep flocks have to keep moving about, for the animals eat all the grass in one place and must then wander off somewhere else for more pasture. Since the people must follow them they cannot have any fixed homes, or build houses or cities, but they live in tents that can be put up or taken down in a day. When people live that way, they do not make beautiful things or decorate their houses, or write books or do anything that we call civilized. For all these things one needs a settled home. The Tartars lived roughly and simply under the open sky. They had big round tents made of felt, and covered wagons for traveling. Their clothes were coarse, their hair unkempt, they were not clean and they had no manners at all.

They were splendid horsemen, for the men almost lived on

horseback, and skillful hunters, for they ate the flesh of wild animals as well as that of their own flocks, and they loved to hunt and kill. By chasing the wild things, they learned to be as swift as deer, as cunning as foxes, and as cruel as wolves. They taught their boys, when they were very little, to ride on a sheep's back, to make little bows and arrows and to shoot rats and birds. When they were a little older, they began to kill hares and foxes and to ride horses and so, when they were grown and ready to join the men in war and in the hunt, they were already good riders and archers. The Tartars despised weakness. At meals, the best of the meat was given to the strong men and the growing boys and what was left was given to the old people, for they scorned old age because it was weak. How different from the Chinese way!

Every Tartar was trained to fight, and they loved war. Though they raised no crops, they thought they had a right to sweep down on the farm-lands and carry off the harvest of other people, and though they mined no gold and wove no silk, it was fine fun to raid a city and to plunder the treasure that others had made and collected.

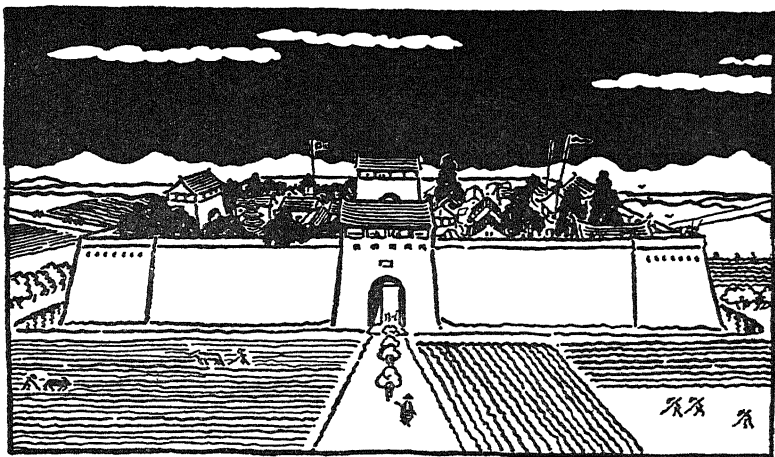
In war, they depended mostly on the quickness of their horses, both in attack and in flight, and on their bows and arrows. Their attack was fierce and sudden. If it did not succeed, they were never ashamed to run away, and sometimes their flight was more dangerous than their attack, for if their enemies pursued them, they would suddenly wheel around and sweep back with yells and with showers of arrows, taking their pursuers by surprise. When they conquered, they plundered and killed without mercy. The Chinese way of fighting was very different. While the Tartars rode horseback and had no organization, the Chinese rode in chariots, fought in solid companies and obeyed a leader. "An army," said the Chinese,

"conquers because of its harmony and not because of its numbers. The Tartars are light and nimble, but they have no order. They are greedy and have no love for one another. When they conquer, no one will give up anything for another, and when they are defeated, no one tries to save another."

Can you imagine people more opposite than these two? There they were, in the same part of the earth, the Chinese in the great river-valleys and plains, tilling the ground, building homes and cities, taking the produce of the earth, minerals and woods and cloth, and making lovely things out of them, raising a great civilization: while all along their borders roamed these restless, fierce peoples, looking with envy at the treasures of the Chinese cities and at their rich and delicate foods, attacking and plundering whenever they could. At first, in Shun's or Yu's time, they had not been dangerous. But since then they had increased enormously, they had become strong and skillful in their own ways of living, they had learned much from the Chinese and were a constant danger. And now, when all the states of China were fighting with each other, when it was divided and weak with civil war, the Tartars circled nearer and nearer, getting more and more bold in their raids, more daring in their desire to conquer the fertile lands of the Middle Kingdom for themselves.

What was to become of the peaceful empire of Huang Ti, the firmly-founded kingdom of Yao and of Shun, the careful plans of the Duke of Chou? Was the fine civilization that had been built up for two thousand years to be destroyed by its own princes, or to be trampled under the hoofs of Tartar horses? How was it to be saved?





CHAPTER 7

THE SAGES

IT WAS during this time, when the feudal states were constantly warring with each other and with the Tartars, and when the people were unhappy and oppressed, that some of the wisest men who have ever lived in the world were born in China. Even in the worst times of disorder, wisdom was respected, and during these unhappy centuries men who knew how the country ought to be governed went from court to court, advising the princes to be less selfish and quarrelsome and to remember the ways of the ancient kings. Sometimes they were listened to and sometimes not, but they were always received with honor and allowed to live where they chose. Several of these wise men were really great, and one of them became the great teacher of China, just as Moses was the teacher of the Hebrews, or Mohammed the teacher of the Arabs. This was Confucius, whose name is more highly honored in China than that of any other man.

But first I am going to tell you about Lao-tse, who lived before Confucius. He was born about 604 B.C., in the south-

ern state of Chu. He became keeper of the archives, or librarian, in the royal capital, Loyang, and led a quiet life of thought and study there. Toward the end of his life, knowing that the Chou Dynasty would fall, he left his position and went off into the west. As he was crossing the boundary of the Royal Domain, the warden said to him, "Sir, since you are going to leave us, will you not, for my sake, write a book?" Lao-tse consented, and did write a book, a very short one, in which he put down all the wisdom that had gathered in his heart during his long life. When he had finished it, he set out again for the west, riding on the back of an ox, so they say, and was never heard of again.

He wrote about the Tao, which means, as you know, the Way of Heaven, or the Word of God. "How great is the Tao," says his book, "it cannot be seen nor heard nor even named. How quiet it is! It has no form, and yet it reaches everywhere. All things depend on it for life, and it does not refuse them; it loves and feeds all things, but does not claim them for its own. All things come from it and return to it, but it does not act as their master. It is smaller than the small and greater than the great. Tao lies hidden and cannot be named, yet it can transform and perfect all things."

If a man understands the Tao and lives in accord with it, he too will become quiet and will not push himself forward, nor want things, nor fight with other people. He will rest in the Tao and become one with it, and share its quickening and nourishing powers. If he does this and lets the Tao flow through his life, there is nothing he cannot do.

"Great virtue is like water. Water nourishes everything, yet it takes the lowest place of all. Rivers and oceans are the lords of a hundred streams because they are lower than the streams. Nothing is more tender and delicate than water,

but it can conquer things that are strong and hard. Therefore the wise man does not push himself forward nor make himself great. He does not fight and therefore no one can fight with him. He helps the myriad things to grow, but he does not interfere. He has not a heart of his own; he makes the Hundred Families' hearts his heart. He meets the good with goodness and he meets the bad, too, with goodness. He makes himself the lowest of all and yet all the world will flock to that man who knows the Tao. If kings and princes knew it, the country would become orderly without their making any effort."

"When the first kings were reigning the people did not know that they were being ruled; the later kings they loved and praised; then they feared their rulers, and now they despise them. How carefully those early kings considered their words! They did their work, and their work was successful, and the Hundred Families said, 'We have done all this ourselves.'"

Like all wise men, Lao-tse did not love war. "Weapons, even when they are victorious," he said, "are not blessed among tools. He who rejoices at victory, enjoys the killing of men, and he who enjoys the killing of men cannot hold the kingdom."

I cannot tell you the hundredth part of his wisdom, but wisdom is so rare and beautiful a thing that it is hard to lay down the little book of Lao-tse. Here are a few more of his sayings:

"He who keeps his tenderness is called strong."

"That which is hard and stiff belongs to the realm of death, while the tender and weak belong to the realm of life."

"The Way of Heaven is like the bending of a bow. It humbles the mighty and exalts the lowly."

"The great Way is very plain ; but people prefer the by-paths."

"My words are easy to understand and easy to practice ; yet in the world no one can understand them and no one can practice them."



Now all of this is very high wisdom indeed. Lao-tse wrote for those who understood the Tao and his book will probably never be forgotten ; but many, many people could not understand nor practice what he wrote and it is small wonder that the great philosopher, Confucius, who was a young man when Lao-tse was very old, became their teacher. For Confucius spoke to everyone, to those who were wise and to those who were not, and showed them a way to live. He spoke not so much of the Tao, but of the Li, of one's behavior in every act and detail of life. Lao-tse did not think that the ceremonies were very important. He knew that, if a person were perfectly good, he could act as simply as a small child, and yet offend no one. But Confucius was dealing with a generation that was forgetful of duty, that could not grasp these high truths. He gave them something easier to understand ; their daily duty to their family and their country. He taught them nothing new. He simply reminded them of the way in which their ancestors had lived and made it clear to them again ; and he himself believed it and lived it for them. It was he who carried the design of the civilization of China through these troubled times and handed it down, unspoiled, to future generations.

Confucius' name, in Chinese, is Kung-fu-tse, but the first European scholars who went to the East found that name hard to pronounce, so they turned it into Latin and called it Confucius. He was born in 551 B.C. in the state of Lu, in Shantung.* This was the state that had been given by Wu Wang to the Duke of Chou, and the Duke's descendants had held it ever since, for about six hundred years. Lu alone was given the privilege of sacrificing to Heaven and Earth, a privilege that had been granted long ago because of the great services and the noble character of the Duke of Chou. Lu was a small state, but it was fairly well governed and was proud of its learning and its elegance. Its capital, Chu-fu, was a well-built city, with wide moats surrounding it, and strong walls pierced with handsome gates. The Duke's palace was there and other wealthy families had mansions in the capital. The finest houses in China had only one story, but they were well-built, decorated with carved and painted wood, and roofed with colored tiles. They were built around many courtyards and surrounded by high walls, and each had its gardens and fish-ponds, for the Chinese are great lovers of every natural beauty. In front of the Duke's palace was a wide open space where stood the altars of the land and the grain; around them were groves of trees under which the people walked and took their pleasure. The altars of Heaven and Earth lay outside the walls, beyond the southern and the northern gates.

In the narrow city streets, merchants and farmers, scholars and soldiers passed one another, each on his own business. The chariot of a nobleman, surrounded by his guards, in armor and plumed helmets, with spears in hand, pushed the passers-by against the wall as it drove to the Duke's palace; and heavy wagons, drawn by oxen, creaked slowly by, carrying farm-

* See the map on page 87.

goods, or building material, or provisions for the ducal granaries. Walking along the street, one might hear, inside a building, the clamor of many young voices ; this would be a school, where the boys learned their lessons by heart, and shouted them aloud as they learned. Lu had good schools and an excellent library.

Confucius was born in a country village, but moved to Chu-fu during his boyhood. He was a very serious little boy, and loved to play that he was taking part in a sacrifice, setting the sacred vessels in their proper places, making his offerings and his bows to the spirits. He was well educated, and at seventeen we find him holding office, as superintendent of the public fields and granaries of the Duke. "My calculations must be right," he said, "that is all I have to worry about." Later he was given charge of the Duke's cattle and sheep and again he said, "The oxen and sheep must be fat and strong. That is my only anxiety." He loved learning, and when he was twenty-two he began to teach. The year after this his mother died, and, following the old rules of ceremony, he gave up his public duties and lived in mourning and in retirement for three years. Now people had been careless about the ceremonies during all the centuries of unrest and disorder, and this act of Confucius, who already had devoted pupils and was respected in the city, made them remember and be a little sorry that they had left the old ways.

During his years of retirement Confucius gave himself up to study and literary work. He loved the old traditions—the history that you know, and the poetry that had been kept and written down ever since the days of Wen and of Wu. He believed that the only way the country could ever find peace and happiness again was the way of Yao and Shun, the way of reverence and uprightness. So he gathered together all the

books that he could find that told of history and music, ceremony, poetry and religion, and he began to put them into the form that we read now and that the Chinese people have lived by for thousands of years.

After his years of mourning were over, he traveled into some of the neighboring states, still searching for any knowledge he might gain of old customs. He visited Loyang, the royal capital. This city had been laid out by the Duke of Chou, and Confucius had a special reverence for the founders of the Chou dynasty. In the palace he saw paintings (the first paintings that are mentioned in Chinese history) of the ancient kings, and in the big Hall of Audience he saw one that particularly delighted his heart: a picture of the Duke of Chou, holding his young nephew, Cheng, on his lap, receiving the homage of his vassals.

He taught and studied for many years in Lu, gathering about him many fine men as pupils. He wanted only those who really cared to learn. "If I teach a man one corner of a subject," he said, "and he cannot from that understand the other three, I do not repeat the lesson." But if a man really wanted to learn he was never turned away. "From the man who pays me for my teaching with a bundle of dried fish, up, I have never refused instruction to any man," said Confucius. He taught history, literature, the ceremonies, music and poetry, and continued his own work of putting together the old records. He taught in his own house, in other people's houses, and while walking with his friends under the spacious trees beside the altars of the land. He taught the old truths, strengthening them with wisdom of his own.

"The ancient kings who wished to make their kingdom perfectly happy, first put their states in order. Since they wished to put their states in order, they first made their own

families happy and harmonious. Since they wished their families to be happy and harmonious, they first controlled themselves. Since they wished to control themselves, they first purified their hearts. Wishing to purify their hearts, they first tried to think rightly. Wishing to think rightly, they learned all that they could learn. One learns by finding out the truth about things. Having found out the truth, their learning was complete. When their learning was complete, they were able to think rightly. When they could think rightly, they were able to purify their hearts. Their hearts being pure, they could control themselves. When they could control themselves, they could make their families happy and harmonious. Their families being happy and harmonious, they could put their states in order. Their states being in order, the whole kingdom was happy and peaceful."

"From the Son of Heaven down to the multitudes of the people, self-control is the root of all things. When the root is cared for, that which springs from it must be right."

Surely one of the great things that we have to learn from the Chinese is the fact that all our happiness and all our trouble come from within ourselves. We have been taught it, too, of course, but there are no people who are so insistent on this point as they are. They keep repeating it in a thousand ways all through their history. "Archery," Confucius said, "is like the life of a good man. When the archer misses the center of the target, he turns around and seeks the cause of his failure within himself."

Confucius believed, as Lao-tse did, that perfection is possible to man, and that Heaven desires our perfection. "Perfection is the beginning and the end of all creatures, and without this perfection there would be no creatures and no things."

Confucius taught every step of the way toward that per-

fection, as he saw it. He believed in performing every detail of the ceremonies, down to the smallest matters of dress and behavior. He set the example of correctness himself, being unwilling even to eat his meals if the mat on which he sat was not straight.

Pupils came to him from Lu and from neighboring states. Old men and young, who believed as he did, learned from him and went back to their states to put their faith into action. When he was fifty years old, he held public office again, first as magistrate of a small town, then as Minister of Works to the Duke of Lu, and finally as Minister of Crime. His public work was most successful ; cheating and wrong-doing vanished under his influence, and it is said that when he was Minister of Crime there was no crime. The people, who were always quick to put their love into artistic form, began to sing about him and the old records say that he "flew in songs through the people's mouths."

Then a sad thing happened. The feudal states were always jealous of each other, as you know. Lu lay next to the powerful state of Tsi, and when the Duke of Tsi saw that Lu was being guided by a man like Confucius, he became anxious. He knew what an able and upright minister could make of even a small state, for his own state owed its power to just such a man. He was afraid that Lu might grow as strong as Tsi. So he did an unworthy thing. Pretending great friendship, he sent a gift to the Duke of Lu, a gift of eighty dancing girls and one hundred and twenty beautiful horses. He knew his neighbor's weaknesses. After a little doubt, the Duke of Lu accepted them, and enjoyed both the girls and the horses immensely. He enjoyed them so much that for three days he did not appear in his hall of audience, nor call his ministers to him. Confucius would not serve a ruler who

could so neglect his duty, and he resigned his office. This was just what the Duke of Tsi had planned, and his plan succeeded perfectly. Confucius waited until the time of the next great sacrifice, and when he saw that the Duke of Lu performed this carelessly and was still given up to pleasure, he left Lu and sought employment in another state.

For fourteen years after that he wandered from state to state, accompanied by a small group of devoted disciples, seeking a prince who would be willing to make him his minister and under his guidance lead the kingdom into peace and order again. It was a sad and disappointing time, for he found no such prince, nor was there even one who was willing to take the risk of having so honest and high-minded a minister in his court. He went to almost all the states of the eastern part of the kingdom: through Wei and Chen, through Tsi and Cheng, and even down to Chu, the big southern state that bordered the Yangtze. When he and his disciples left Lu, you can imagine that they were all rather unhappy about it. They went first into the state of Wei, and in those days each state had officials and customs officers at its borders, just as if each of them had been a separate country. The officer at the border of Wei asked to see Confucius, as he had often heard about him. When he came out, after seeing and talking to him, he said to the disciples, "My friends, why are you so disheartened because your master has left his position? For a long time the kingdom has been going the wrong way, and now God is going to use your master as a bell to call the people back to truth and goodness."

Many stories are told about these years of wandering, from which you can build up a picture of the man himself. When they were passing through the city of Kwang, Confucius was mistaken for another minister of Lu who had once wronged

Kwang. So he was seized and thrown into prison. When he had been there for some time, his disciples grew very anxious about his safety, but their master reassured them. "After the death of Duke Wen," he said, "the truth was entrusted to me. If Heaven had wished this truth to perish, it would not have raised me up at this late day to preserve it. And if Heaven does not wish the truth to perish, what can the people of Kwang do to me?" The mistake was found out and he was released. During his imprisonment, one of his pupils whom he loved very much had been separated from him, and found him at last with great joy. "I was afraid that you had died," said the master. "While you are alive," answered his pupil, "how could I presume to die?"

Another time in passing through Cheng, he was separated from his disciples and they sought him anxiously. When they had found him again, one of them said to him, "While I was looking for you, I met a man who said to me, 'At the East Gate I saw a man who was as tall as Yu, who had a brow like Yao's and the neck and shoulders of a hero, but he looked as forlorn as a dog at a funeral.' I knew it must be you." Confucius laughed heartily. "The first part of the description was not quite correct, but that about the dog was excellent," he said. He described himself once. A pupil of his had been questioned about his master and had not known how to answer. When he heard of this, Confucius said, "Why did you not say, 'My master is simply a man who, in his eager desire to know, forgets to eat; who, in the joy of knowing, forgets his sorrows, and who does not see that he is growing old?'" "

Wherever he went, he taught, and when his advice was asked, he gave it truthfully. One prince told Confucius that there was a great deal of robbery in his state and asked him how he could put an end to it. "If you, Sir," answered Con-

fucius, "did not want to possess things, your people would not steal, even though you paid them to do it." The same prince asked him, "Is it right to kill bad people for the sake of the good ones?" "Sir, why use killing at all?" replied Confucius. "If you want what is good, your people will be good. The relation between rulers and their people is like that between the wind and the grass. When the wind blows, the grass bends."

Not many of the princes wanted what was good, and none was willing to walk the straight and simple path that the master pointed out to them.

At last, when he was seventy years old, he was asked to come back to Lu and he returned to his native state, a weary old man, sad and disheartened because of the condition of the country and because he believed that his teachings had failed. He opened his school again, and pupils came to him from far and near. "I never get tired of learning," he said, "and I never get tired of teaching." He finished his work of collecting the great literature of China and put it into four books that have been ever since the Sacred Books, The Classics of the Chinese. These are *The Book of History*, *The Book of Poetry*, *The Book of Ceremony* and *The Book of Changes*, a philosophical work based on the book that Duke Wen wrote when Chow Sin threw him into prison. Confucius himself wrote only a brief history of the state of Lu, which is the fifth of the Classics.

It was not until after his death, which came peacefully a few years later, that the Chinese realized how wise he was. Then they turned to the work that he had done, and to his sayings, which had been written down by his disciples, and honored him as their greatest teacher. For more than two thousand years his teaching has been the law of their land.

Every scholar, every man who holds office in China, must know the Classics by heart, every child is taught them. No nation has ever learned its laws more faithfully, and no nation has ever lasted so long.



ANOTHER of these philosophers was Mencius, or Meng-tse, whose name was also turned into Latin for the convenience of European scholars. Mencius was born about one hundred years after the death of Confucius, but he was a great admirer of the master's doctrines and continued his teachings. He, too, went from state to state, advising, teaching, urging better ways and speaking the truth fearlessly. The kingdom was in just as bad a condition as it was in Confucius' time ; things had gone from bad to worse, and the end was not far off. Many of the princes now called themselves kings and their states were practically independent.

One day he visited the king of Liang. They walked in the royal gardens and paused beside a pond. It was a lovely day ; the trees swayed in the breeze, and under them grazed, unafraid, gentle-eyed deer with their fawns. On the water the geese and ducks swam busily, their plumage shining in the sun. The king looked about him with pleasure and asked, "Do wise and good princes enjoy these things, just as I do ?" "Being wise and good," answered Mencius, "they can enjoy them. If they are not wise and good, even though they have these things, they cannot enjoy them. It says in the *Book of Poetry* that Duke Wen employed his people to build him a tower and a park and a pond, and they loved to do the work for him and rejoiced because he had his deer and his

fishes and his turtles. The ancient kings gave pleasure to the people as well as to themselves and therefore they could enjoy it."

The king said, "My virtue is small, but I do my very best to govern my kingdom well. When I look at the neighboring kingdoms, I cannot find any other king who thinks as much about it as I do. Yet my kingdom grows no larger and the others grow no smaller. How is this?"

"Your Majesty loves war," answered the philosopher. "Let me explain to you in terms of war. Suppose that some soldiers are fighting in a battle; after meeting the enemy, they throw away their weapons, turn and run away. Some of them run a hundred yards and some run fifty. What would you think if the ones that ran away fifty yards laughed at those who ran a hundred?"

"They would have no right to laugh," said the king, "for even if they did not run so far, they ran away just as much as the others."

"If your Majesty understands that," said Mencius, "you will understand why your kingdom grows no larger than your neighbor's."

Then, still walking in the sunshine by the fish pond, or under the trees where the graceful deer raised their heads to look at the two men, Mencius gave the King a lesson in government.

"If you do not interfere with the times of farming, you will have more grain than can be used. If you do not allow men to use nets in the pools and the ponds, there will be more fishes and turtles than can be eaten. If the woodcutters enter the forests only at the right time, you will have more wood than you need. When there is more grain, more fish and turtles and more wood than can be used, the people can

feed the living and bury the dead in contentment. When your people can feed the living and bury the dead contentedly, you have taken the first step toward gaining the whole kingdom.

"Have mulberry trees planted about the small farms and people fifty years old can wear silk. Be careful about breeding the fowls, the pigs, and the dogs, and people seventy years old will have meat to eat. Never take the men away from the cultivation of the large farms and no one will suffer from hunger. Have good schools, teaching especially the duty of children to their parents and to their brothers, and you will never see gray-haired men on your roads carrying burdens on their backs. When these results are seen in a state, people of seventy wearing silk and eating flesh and the Black-haired People not suffering from hunger or cold, that state has always gained the royal power.

"In your state, the dogs and the pigs are eating up the food of men, and you do not stop them. There are people dying from famine on your roads, and you do not feed them from your granaries. When people die, you say, 'It is not my fault; it is the fault of the year.' How is this different from stabbing a man and then saying, 'It was not I; it was the weapon that killed him?' If your Majesty does not lay the blame on the year, people will come to you from all over the empire." "I am listening to your teaching," said the king humbly. "Is there any difference between killing a man with a stick or with a sword?" asked the philosopher. "There is no difference," answered the king. "Is there any difference between doing it with a sword or with a method of government?" "There is no difference."

After a pause, the king said, "In all the kingdom there was not a stronger state than mine, as you, Sir, know. But

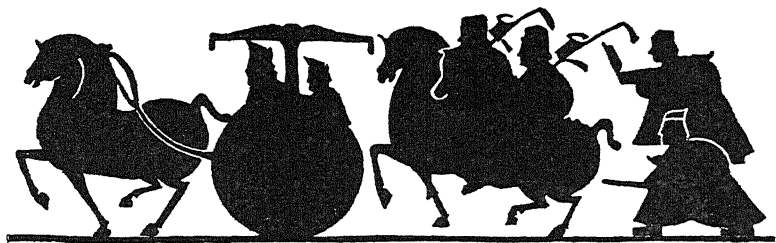
since I have been ruling over it, we have been defeated on the east by Tsi, and my eldest son was killed ; on the west we have lost much territory to Tsin, and on the south Chu has disgraced us. I have brought shame upon my ancestors and I want to wipe away this shame. How can I do it ?”

“A very small state,” replied Mencius, “can gain the royal power. If your Majesty will rule kindly, imposing light punishments, and light taxes, causing the fields to be plowed deep, and well weeded, educating the people in the Five Relationships, you will then have a people who can resist, with nothing but sticks in their hands, the armor and the sharp weapons of Tsin and of Chu. There is an old saying, ‘The kind man has no enemy.’ I beg your Majesty not to doubt what I say.”

So ended their talk by the duck-pond, but Mencius went to many other courts. One king asked him, “How can the country be settled ?” “It will be settled by being united under one rule,” said Mencius. “Who can so unite it ?” “He who has no pleasure in killing men can so unite it. Now among the leaders of men in the kingdom, there is not one who does not find pleasure in killing men. If there were one who had no pleasure in killing men, the people would flock to him, as water flows downward with a rush which no one can stop.”

So spoke Mencius and so had spoken Confucius before him, and everyone listened but no one dared to obey. These wise men could not foresee that, only a short time after the death of Mencius, the kingdom would indeed be united, but in the very opposite way from the way that they advised, and by a very different man from the man whom they sought.





CHAPTER 8

THE EMPIRE OF SHI HUANG TI [246-210 B.C.]

SHORTLY before the death of Mencius, in about 300 B.C. Chow Siang became king of Tsin, and he had but one desire. This was to make himself lord of the whole country, to conquer all the other states and to proclaim himself the Son of Heaven. The rulers of all the big states had taken the title of king, and there were eleven kingdoms in China at that time. The king of Tsin set himself to fight them all. He did not let his conscience stand in his way. He broke treaties and promises until no one trusted a word he said. The other kingdoms banded against him, but in vain. He fought his way through them all.

At last, the Sovereign himself, the unworthy descendant of the noble family of Chou, began to be afraid. The Royal Domain lay very close to Tsin, and Chow Siang's ambition was not hard to guess. The Sovereign called all the other states to him and asked them to hold his dangerous neighbor back. When Chow Siang heard of this, before the other states had time to assemble, he brought together his whole army and marched across the western border of the Royal Domain. For five hundred years no one had attacked the Dynasty of Chou. The old man who called himself the Son of Heaven was so terrified that he came humbly out of the gates of Loyang to meet the king of Tsin, bowed low before him and offered him thirty-six cities if he would stop his

advance and go peaceably home. But Chow Siang saw his great chance ; his goal was in sight and he was not going to stop now. He brushed the useless old king aside and marched on to the capital. It yielded without a struggle and Chow Siang took the symbols of royalty and annexed the Royal Domain to the territories of Tsin. Shortly afterwards, he made a solemn sacrifice to Heaven and considered himself the sovereign of China. This was in 255 B.C.

The other states were shocked, but they did not intend to acknowledge him as their lord. He had not added much to his territory, for the Royal Domain was small, and he had not gained much power by taking the place of the worthless king. It was a strange situation. For a time, there was no Son of Heaven on the throne of China, but in his place was the chieftain of a partly barbarous province, who had fought his way there through a lifetime of bloodshed and treachery, and who was hated and feared by all the rest of the country. What was he going to do ? If he wanted to bring the whole land under his rule, the hardest struggle was still ahead, for he must conquer it by force and his enemies were many. But Chow Siang was old ; he had spent his whole life in gaining the position he now held, and, shortly after he had conquered the Royal Domain, he died. His kingdom and the tremendous task that lay before him were inherited by his great-grandson, a boy thirteen years old.

This boy of thirteen, however, was a very unusual boy, and guarding him was a minister who was as crafty and as strong as any man in China. He needed all the craft and strength that he had, for of course all the other kingdoms were watching and hoping for the time when they could fight against Tsin and destroy it. Tsin was like a tiger that had caught its prey, and the other states were like wolves, prowling about

at a safe distance, not daring to attack the tiger, and yet hoping that perhaps they could catch him at a weak moment, leap upon him all together, and kill him. Secretly they formed a league against Tsin, and messengers were constantly going from court to court, planning and plotting to overcome their dreaded enemy. They had an excellent general, who was at the head of all their combined armies, and Tsin had reason to be afraid of them when he was their leader.

The crafty minister, however, who was guarding the boy king and ruling for him, was not to be caught. He was watching night and day, and he knew everything that was going on in the whole Kingdom. He had spies at every court, he knew about the league, and he knew how fine a general they had to lead their armies. He told his spies to make all the princes distrust the general, and the spies started false rumors at all the courts. They whispered to everyone whom they met that this general was a traitor, and that if he defeated Tsin he would make himself emperor and turn against the princes and defeat them too. This was a lie, but the princes were stupid enough to believe it. They dismissed the general, and the clever minister of Tsin breathed a sigh of relief, for he knew that without their leader the princes were not to be feared. After that he was free to teach his young master, to train the powerful army of Tsin and to keep it in good condition until the boy grew up and could take things into his own hands.

When the boy was old enough, he took things into his own hands very decidedly. He found out that some people in his own court had been plotting against him, to put him off the throne and to take it themselves. Even his own mother was in the plot. He discovered quickly who had been the leader, and had that man and all his family killed. He cut

off the heads of everyone, from the slaves up, who had been in the plot or had had anything to do with it, exiled four thousand families, and sent his mother away from court. Then he laid his naked sword across his knees as he sat on his throne, and announced that anyone who criticized him would be killed at once. His name was Cheng, but we will call him by the name which he took later, Shi Huang Ti.

You know how honestly ministers always spoke to their masters in China. Twenty-seven of his faithful advisers told Shi Huang Ti just what they thought of him. Exiling one's mother and refusing to listen to advice are not what the Chinese believed in doing. The twenty-seven were put to death. Finally one old man asked audience of the King. Shi Huang received him, with his hand on his sword, and with a boiling caldron on one side of the audience room, into which offenders were often thrown. The old minister bowed low and asked permission to speak, which was granted.

"Your Majesty," he said, "has a violent and presumptuous character. You do not control yourself. You have banished your mother, and you have refused the advice of wise and virtuous men. This will be known all over the land and no one will respect you. I am afraid for you and for your dynasty. That is all I have to say."

He bowed low again, took off his outer robe, and walked over to the boiling caldron, expecting that the slaves would be ordered to throw him into it. But Shi Huang Ti had greatness in him, or he could not have become the ruler that unified China. He stepped down from the throne, took the old man's hand, and asked him to be his councillor. On this man's advice, he recalled his mother and let her live in the palace.

The first thing that Shi Huang Ti planned, of course, when

he had settled things at his own court, was the conquest of the other kingdoms. "Spare no money," advised his crafty minister, "in making trouble between your enemies. Make them distrust and hate each other, and they will all be in your power." So his spies started quarrels between the princes, made them distrust their best officers, bribed anyone they could, and made as much trouble as possible. Meanwhile Shi Huang Ti was increasing his army, training it, and making arms and ammunition. When he was ready, he started his attack. He made war on one small state, annexed it and put its king and all his family to death. Then he did the same thing to another state.

The prince of Yen tried to stop this career of conquest by assassinating Shi Huang Ti. He persuaded one of his courtiers to undertake the deed. "How can I get into the King's presence?" asked the courtier. "He will not trust me to come near his person, knowing that I come from Yen. How shall I be able to stab him?"

"A general of his," said the prince, "is here at my court. He has been exiled from Tsin; he hates Shi Huang Ti with all his soul, and Shi Huang Ti wants him to be killed. If you could go to Tsin with this man's head, the king would trust you and admit you to his presence." So the courtier went to the general and told him the plan.

"I want to kill the King of Tsin," he said. "Help me to do it. You hate him and he wants your life. If I could go to him with your head in my left hand, I could go so near to him that with my right hand I could plunge the poisoned dagger in his heart."

"I am thirsty for revenge," answered the general, "do as you like!" With that he killed himself, and the courtier took his head and a poisoned dagger, and went to the court

of Tsin. But Shi Huang Ti was too quick for him, and leaped away as the dagger flashed out. He knew that the man came from Yen, and he took revenge on the little state, killed its prince and annexed it.

Chu, you remember, was one of the biggest states, and its conquest was difficult. Shi Huang Ti called his ablest generals to advise him. The oldest and most experienced among them said, "Give me six hundred thousand men and I will conquer Chu for you."

Shi Huang Ti laughed. "You are getting old," he said. "Someone else can do it with less men than that." So another of the generals offered to conquer Chu with two hundred thousand men, and Shi Huang Ti gave him the army and let him try. He was badly defeated. Then the King went to the old general, asked his pardon and told him that as soon as the men could be brought together, he would give him an army of six hundred thousand, and put him in command of the attack on Chu.

The old general led this great army down to Chu, and sent out spies to see what the enemy was doing. The spies reported that Chu was ready for them, strongly entrenched and prepared to fight to the death. The old man ordered his army to build a strong camp, and to settle down in it. He made the soldiers rest, bathe and exercise. They practised archery, spear-throwing, horsemanship, hunting and other sports, and he saw that they had excellent food. He himself went among them, ate with them, and laughed with them. After a few months of this life he asked them, "Are you happy?" A great shout of joy rose in response, and he said, "Good! Men like these can be victorious."

Meanwhile the men of Chu, amazed at what was going on, got tired of waiting for their enemies, moved out of their

entrenched position, and went west to attack Tsin. That was just what the old general had waited for. He followed them, attacked them unexpectedly, and completely defeated them. Chu was annexed.

Wei was the next to be overcome. Its capital city lay near the Huang River, and its people were besieged there. Shi Huang Ti's engineers dug a new channel for the river, and turned the force of its waters against the walls of the city. This was too strong an enemy for the people of Wei to resist. They surrendered, and their state was added to the domain of Tsin.

Tsi was the last of the big states to go down. Shi Huang Ti had bribed her with piles of money not to help the other states, and she had accepted the bribe and had not joined the others in their resistance against the common enemy. Now she found herself all alone, the other states destroyed, and Tsin, triumphant and ten times more powerful than she had been, facing her. She yielded without a fight.



So AT LAST Shi Huang Ti was supreme over the whole of China. In all the blood-drenched land not a prince raised his banner in defiance. The princes, their families and their generals were all dead. They say that this conquest cost one and a half million lives, for as the armies were conquered, they were killed.

The King called his ministers together. "Behold my Empire," he said. "What name shall the sovereign of such a

land bear?" They decided that he must be called Huang Ti or Great Emperor. "I will be called Shi Huang Ti," he said, "the First Great Emperor, and my son shall be called the Second Great Emperor, and his son the Third Great Emperor, and so on down to the ten thousandth generation." That was the way he got his name, and after this time all the rulers of China called themselves emperors.

He established his court at Hien Yang, over on the Wei River. His imperial color was black, his favorite number was six, and his symbol was water. He ordered grand rejoicings throughout the land, and perhaps the weary people truly rejoiced, for at least there could be no more war, since there was no one left to fight. He ordered all the weapons in the Empire to be brought to him, and he had them melted and cast into bells, and into twelve great statues which stood in front of his palace. For every state that he had conquered, he had a palace built in his capital, and into the palace were brought the treasures from these states. He wanted his city to look like the Milky Way, with a palace for every star, and workmen were called from all over the Empire to make it beautiful.

One day in the council, one of his ministers said, "How is this mighty Empire to be governed? Chu and Tsi are far away. Why do you not let your sons rule over them?" Shi Huang Ti asked the advice of his ministers. "The founders of other dynasties," said his Prime Minister, the clever Li-sse, "gave provinces to their sons and their nobles. But when these feudal princes found themselves far from the court, they fought one another and sought greater power. Let your Majesty keep the Empire under his own hand."

Shi Huang Ti listened to this advice. He had not destroyed the feudal system of two thousand years merely to set

up another feudal system. With the advice of Li-sse he thought out another plan. He divided the Empire into thirty-six provinces (six times six, you see, his favorite number) and he did not let independent princes govern these, but appointed governors over them, whom he could control. Each province had three governors; one took care of the army and the defense of the country, one took charge of the laws and industries and all peaceful activities, and one represented the Emperor and reported to him about everything that was done in the province. These men were all sent out by the Emperor and could be removed by him at any time if he did not like what they did. So Shi Huang Ti had absolute control of his Empire, and there was no more rebellion and no more independence for a time.

But, as you may remember, there were other enemies of China besides the Chinese themselves. The Tartars, the wild horsemen of the north and west, still beat at the borders, and during all the years when the country was so upset, they had grown bolder and bolder and more and more dangerous. Shi Huang Ti resolved to drive them back once and for all. He sent his best general and a big army and defeated them. But fighting the Tartars was like fighting wind or water. One thinks that they are driven back, but suddenly they flow or blow in again, and it is hard to lay one's hands on them. Shi Huang Ti's busy mind formed another plan, a new way to keep them out of China. He would build a great wall all across the north that would shut them out as if they were indeed wind or water. And he began to build the Great Wall, that still lies like a big dragon of stone across the hills of China for fifteen hundred miles.

Walls had been built before this. The northern states and his own state of Tsin had built fortifications against the Tartars,

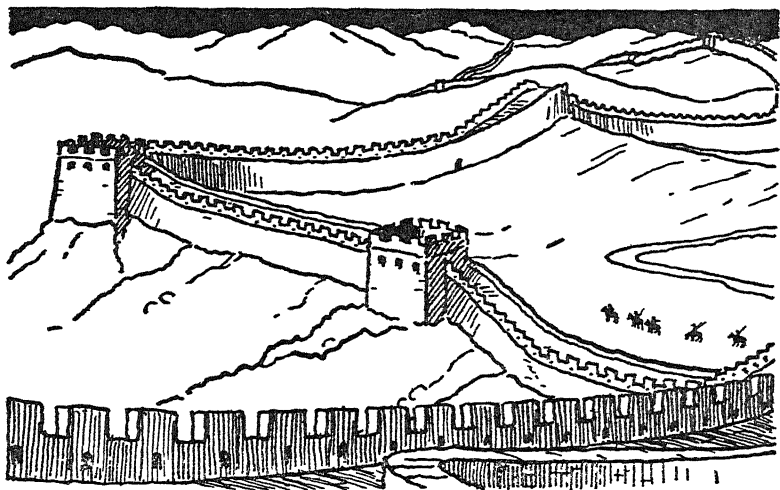
but now all these were to be joined and one continuous wall was to protect the Empire. Look at the pictures of it, notice its height and its breadth, its towers and its broad top, and think of the work of planning it and building it! An army of three hundred thousand men was sent there at once to work on it, under the Emperor's ablest general, and all those who were condemned to death, all prisoners, and probably anyone whom Shi Huang Ti disliked, were sent north to join the builders. Towns must be raised to house these thousands of workers; they must be governed, and, hardest of all, they must be fed. How could they raise grain or herd cattle while the Wall was being built? This had to be done by the rest of the Empire, and all of China was taxed until the people groaned. From all sides heavy wagons creaked northward, carrying provisions, and they did not always reach the north, for accidents happened and the goods were often stolen. It was like the building of the pyramids of Egypt, but perhaps harder, for the pyramids were raised right near the Nile and the fertile fields of Egypt, while men and food and materials had to be sent many a long mile to be used for the building of the Wall. It was a great burden to the unhappy people that had just attained peace.

"If you have a son, get rid of him," they cried, "if you have a daughter, drown her! Do you not see, at the foot of the Great Wall, the piles of dead bodies on which it is built?"

Bitter as was the building of it, however, it served its purpose at the time and kept away the Tartars. There were sentinels on its towers, and beacon fires that could be lighted to call for distant help, and besides, the Tartars were not people who could get together and make an organized attack on a fortification. They had to be out in an open field to do

their fighting, and they never fought together, but each man for himself.

Besides this immense work, the Emperor had many roads and canals and bridges made. If the Empire was to be one country, under the control of one man, nothing was more necessary than to have good roads, for roads in a country are very like the arteries in your body that carry the blood from the heart to every fingertip. Also, he loved to travel all over his Empire, and he wanted good roads to drive over. From one end of China to another he went, with a great crowd of chariots and attendants following him, looking over his vast domain, regulating the laws, and the industries, sacrificing to the hills and the streams, and everywhere leaving inscriptions carved on stone pillars, telling the world what a great man he was and what he had done.



AND TRULY, until now you might think him a great man, though a harsh one. He had united China, established good

government, kept back the Tartars, built roads and made peace and order, though at the cost of much bloodshed. Now he did a thing that shocked all of China, and that made him hated by all lovers of Chinese civilization.

In 213 B.C. he gave a great feast in Hien Yang. Of course many people made speeches, praising him and his greatness, and telling all the fine things he had done ; and he listened complacently, thinking, doubtless, that he deserved it all. One man, however, a scholar who loved the old ways of government, and looked back to Yao and Shun as the perfect rulers, dared to criticize the Emperor, because he had given up the old feudal way of government, and because he called himself the First Great Emperor, as if there had been none before him. He said that Shi Huang Ti should do as the ancient rulers had done. The Emperor's face grew dark with anger as he looked upon the bold speaker. He asked his ministers what they thought of this man's words. Li-sse, who knew his master well, made even a more daring speech than that of the scholar.

"The ancient emperors," he said, "were not so wise as they are thought to be. Their empire was always upset and at war. Your Majesty's government is much better, for behold ! the Empire is at peace, and ruled by one man ! These scholars read their books so much that they think of nothing but olden times, and cannot see the present. Their talk is all nonsense, and yet they do great harm, for they criticize you among the people because you are not like their old kings. I propose that all the old books be burned, and that anyone who talks about old times and criticizes the present be put to death."

This pleased Shi Huang Ti, for he wanted to start all over

again, with a new way of governing and a new way of living, and he did not want anyone to remember that there had ever been another way. He ordered all the books in the land, except books on medicine, witchcraft, farming, and the history of Tsin, to be brought to the capital and to be burned publicly. If anyone did not bring all the books that he had within thirty days, he was to be branded on the face and sent to work on the Great Wall. You can imagine the horror that ran through China at this news. The scholars loved their books better than they did themselves, for their books were like parents and teachers to them, from whom they learned all their wisdom. They believed that the Empire itself would fall, if the words of Yao and Tan and Confucius were lost. Give up to be burned the very heart and soul of their people? What grief and what indignation! Of course, many chose to die rather than to betray their books, and many managed to hide the precious writings in walls or in the ground, and so some were kept; but many men, out of fear, brought their books to Hien Yang, and the fires burned day after day, destroying the careful writing of devoted historians, poets and philosophers.

The Emperor did not live long after this act of destruction. He, who was so feared, who had killed so many thousands, was terrified by the thought of death. No enemy had been able to stand against him, but here was an enemy whom he knew he could not escape. He sent his sorcerers in search of plants whose juice would give immortal life to whosoever drank it. It was said that in the eastern seas there were islands where such plants grew. He sent expeditions there, but they were lost. Some think that these islands were the islands of Japan, and that the men who went on this expe-

dition stayed there and helped to settle Japan. But Shi Huang Ti never got his drug of immortality. He grew very suspicious of everyone, even of his own attendants, because he was afraid of being assassinated. All of his hundreds of beautiful palaces in Hien Yang were joined together by covered galleries so that he could go easily from one to the other, and he never stayed in any one palace, but moved here and there, so that no one could know just where he was. He was not happy.

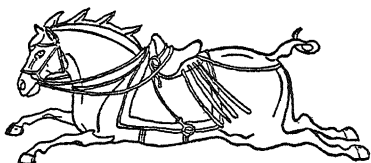
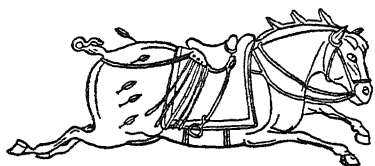
Even at the end of his long reign, he was arrogant and refused to be criticized. Some scholars had refused to give up their books, and continued to talk against him. He had four hundred of them buried alive, and when his favorite son, the crown prince, begged him not to do it and told him that it was wrong, he grew very angry and sent the prince up to the Great Wall, to superintend the work, which was really the same as banishing him.

So, full of fear, with his son far from him, trusting no one, and surely getting no pleasure from the palaces that he was afraid to live in, Shi Huang Ti died, while he was traveling, in 210 B.C. After his death a miserable plot was formed by some unworthy men in the palace: the crown prince and Shi Huang Ti's best and most trusted general (both of them were up working at the Wall) were treacherously put to death; a weak son of his was put on the throne, and only a few years after the great Emperor's death, his dynasty ended in misery and dishonor. He, who planned to have his descendants down to the ten thousandth generation rule his mighty Empire, did not know that his own son, the Second Great Emperor, would be the last of his line.

This Emperor of Tsin was very different from Yao and Shun, from Tang and Wu, not so happy and not so admirable.

But perhaps he was the man whom China needed, for those bloody times had to be ended, and only a strong and cruel man could do it. On the foundation that he laid were built the glorious dynasties, the great art and culture, that came after him.





CHAPTER 9

THE HAN DYNASTY [202 B.C.—220 A.D.]

WHEN SHI HUANG TI died, or rather, before he died, he had a most wonderful tomb made for himself. A great cavern was dug in a hill, and there was prepared a resting-place for his coffin. On the floor was made a picture of the whole of China—its cities, its mountains and its rivers, and the rivers were made of quicksilver and the mountains were built up of clay and stone. Above were the heavens, the sun, moon, and stars, and these were made to move as people believed that they moved in those days. All this little world was run by careful and exquisite machinery, and was planned so that after the great Emperor was buried, the sun and the moon would still light the Empire that was buried in the tomb and the rivers would still run through it. A tremendous amount of work was necessary to complete this elaborate tomb, and thousands of slaves and hundreds of skilled workmen labored over it for many years.

When Shi Huang Ti did die and was buried there, many beautiful things were buried with him—jewels and silks and jade vessels of all kinds, and the inner door was closed and sealed by the slaves who worked there. Then while they were still in the passage that led out into the world, the outer door was closed and sealed, and they were left there to die, buried alive, so that they would not tell the secrets of the tomb; so that no one could know where it was and what it contained. The hill was smoothed down, and grass and

shrubs grew again over it, and there it stands to this day, near the place where Hien Yang used to be.

Now while this astonishing work was being done, and so many slaves were working on it, it happened that a hundred or so prisoners were on the way, one day, to the hill where the tomb was being made. They were in charge of the headman of a nearby village—a tall handsome young man who was much trusted and respected by all the folk of his village and of the surrounding country. Perhaps he was thinking about something else, or perhaps he was careless—anyway, some of his prisoners escaped and ran off, and when he arrived in the evening at the place where they were to spend the night, he found himself with only about half of his company.

He knew that he would be severely punished for letting them escape, so he decided to run away himself. He set the rest of the prisoners free and they followed him, and he soon found himself at the head of a band of rebels. There was great discontent in the country because of the miserable failure of the Tsin dynasty. There was rebellion on every side. Our run-away was strong and generous and commanding and his band grew to be a strong force. His name was Liu Pang.

As things went from bad to worse at court, the whole country rose in revolt, and soon there were two leaders, Liu Pang and one other, both trying to overthrow the last of the Tsins. Liu Pang conquered the capital and the young Emperor yielded to him. Liu Pang treated him courteously, imprisoned him and went out to put the surrounding country in order. While he was away, the other leader, who was jealous of Liu's success, also marched on the capital and entered it. He did a fearful thing. He robbed and plundered the rich city to his heart's content and then he ordered his

soldiers to kill everyone in it including the young Emperor and to burn it down. All this was done and for three months the great capital, the pride and joy of Shi Huang Ti, with its palaces and bridges, its parks and its temples, burned and burned, until nothing was left of it.

You can imagine how furious Liu Pang was to hear of this deed. He made war on the other general and beat him, and after that the nobles begged him to be emperor and to stop the warfare of which every one was so weary. So Liu Pang, who had been only the headman of a village, ascended the throne and became the first Emperor of the great Han Dynasty, which lasted from 202 B.C. to 220 A.D. He took the name of Kao Tsu, and made his capital at Loyang, where the later kings of Chou had lived. The first thing he did was to pardon all prisoners, even criminals, and so made peace with all his former enemies. He also treated all members of the family of Tsin with honor and gave them lands and positions at court.

Then he began to give peace to the Empire, organizing the states, giving many of them back to the feudal families who used to own them, sending governors to others; and the Chinese, who naturally love order and peace, fell easily into their old busy ways, took up their work and prospered. Soldiers went back to their farms, repaired the ditches and the dikes, planted their crops and fished in the rivers. They built up ruined villages and were called upon to give a part of their time to the remaking of roads and bridges and public buildings. The women could bring up their children without fear, and they tended the silkworms with peaceful hearts and wove finer and lovelier silks than before. During Shi Huang Ti's lifetime the writing brush had been invented and ink was made and the writing, or rather the drawing, of the

beautiful Chinese characters became a highly honored art. Pottery and bronze, jewelry and metal-work were made in the cities and towns : musicians and poets sang again, and most of the land was happy.

In only one part of it there was still warfare and unceasing trouble. This was on the northwestern border, where, in spite of the Great Wall and the watchfulness of its garrisons, the Tartars were growing every year more numerous and more troublesome. And as China grew peaceful and rich, they were more and more tempted to raid and to plunder.

The Tartars had grown and developed just as the Chinese had. They were no longer the scattered, undisciplined hordes that had roamed the borders during the Chou dynasty. Although they still lived in tents and on horseback, they were strictly ruled and organized and were growing slowly into the powerful tribes who, a thousand years later, conquered most of Asia and terrified Europe. They had borrowed much from China. Their king was called the Shen-yu, or son of heaven : each morning he came out from his tent and worshipped the rising sun and at night he worshipped the moon. They started their undertakings when the moon was a crescent and came home when it was waning. They honored their ancestors and believed in spirits. Like the Chinese, they made the left the place of honor. The Shen-yu had his Left Minister and his Right Minister, his Left Great General and his Right Great General, his Left and Right Pacifiers. His armies fought in companies under the command of officers. They were far more dangerous than they had been before.

During Kao Tsu's reign, a strong leader named Mow-tan had risen up among the Tartars. He was the first of the great chiefs who later on made so much trouble in the world, and like them all, he was bold, fierce and pitiless. Central

Asia, with its terrible heat and its terrible cold, its deserts, its immense distances and its impassable mountains, has bred many men like him.

Mow-tan's father, who was a chief, did not want him to be his heir, partly because he liked another son of his better, partly because he was somewhat afraid of Mow-tan. So, in order to get rid of him, he sent him off with a message to a neighboring tribe, and as soon as he thought that Mow-tan must have arrived there, he made war on that tribe, hoping that in revenge they would kill Mow-tan, who was in their hands. But his son was far too clever to be caught that way. Stealing the swiftest horse in the enemy's camp, he escaped and galloped back to his father, who made the best of it, and made him general over a large part of his army. Mow-tan, however, knew that his father had wanted to kill him and that he did not want him to be his heir, and he planned his revenge as no Chinese could have planned it.

He was an excellent archer, and had invented a sounding arrow, that is, an arrow with a metal head pierced with holes that made it whistle as it sped through the air. In battle, his sounding arrow led all the rest. One time he called his followers and said to them: "This is my command. Whenever you see me bend my bow and let fly my sounding arrow, bend your bows and let your arrow follow mine. Shoot at whatever I shoot, without hesitation. Whoever disobeys this command of mine will be beheaded immediately."

A few days afterwards, as they were riding about the camp, he spied a favorite horse of his feeding in the pasture. He drew his bow and shot his sounding arrow at his horse. His companions were amazed. Some of them shot also at the horse, but some did not, as they could not believe that he really meant to kill it. But those who did not shoot were beheaded,

as he had threatened. A few days afterwards he shot the arrow at his favorite wife. Again some of his followers were too horrified to shoot, and again those who disobeyed lost their heads. The next thing he shot at was his father's horse, and this was a bold thing to do, for his father was the head of the tribe, as you know. But this time his followers were well-trained and every one of them shot his arrow at the chief's beautiful horse.

Then Mow-tan knew that his plans were ripe and that he could count on these followers to the death. He turned his sounding arrow on his own father and in spite of the horror of the deed, every arrow followed his and the old chief fell dead. Then Mow-tan made himself king and soon united all the western and northern tribes under his leadership. He had 300,000 bowmen under his command, trained and disciplined as he had trained the men who shot his father. With them he regained the territory that had been taken from his tribe by Shi Huang Ti's generals, and he swept around the western end of the Great Wall and killed and plundered as far as the Huang-ho.

Kao Tsu was enraged. He sent spies to see what sort of soldiers these Tartars were. Through his scouts Mow-tan heard of this, and he quickly sent all his best horsemen behind the hills and let the spies see a ragged lot of men and his worst horses. The spies went back and made their report and the Emperor laughed to think what an easy victory he would have. One wise minister warned him and said, "Sire, never despise an enemy." But the Emperor was angry with him and had him thrown in prison.

Then, with an army quickly gathered together, he went himself to fight the Tartars. He went as far west as a city called Ping-ching, in Shansi: and there Mow-tan, bringing

out all his best cavalry, besieged him, surrounding him with thousands and thousands of Tartars. You can see how much the Tartars had borrowed from China by the way that Mow-tan arranged his army. Do you remember the colors that stood for the four directions: black for north, red for south, blue for east and white for west? When Kao Tsu looked out from Ping-ching, he saw at the north a solid mass of black horses with their riders; when he looked south he saw bay horses; on the west the horses were all white, and on the east, there being no blue horses, Mow-tan had placed gray ones with white faces. Here was organization and art added to the wild strength of the barbarians! There was no hope of the Chinese fighting their way out; there was no food left; they must starve if they stayed and die if they went forth. It was a bad place for an emperor of China to be in, and at the mercy of a Tartar chieftain. He was saved by a woman.

There was a very beautiful girl in the court of the Emperor and she came to him and said, "Send me as a peace-offering to the Tartar chieftain. I will charm him and make him marry me, and he will love me so much that he will do anything I ask, and I will ask him to make peace with you and to let you go."

So she dressed in all her most beautiful robes, painted her face as Chinese women did, put on a gorgeous headdress of jewels and gold, and was taken out of the city in a litter to the camp of the Tartars as a peace-offering from the Chinese. There she did indeed as she had promised, and Mow-tan made peace with Kao Tsu and let him go, but it was a very disgraceful peace for the Chinese. The Tartars got off with a tremendous lot of plunder and Kao Tsu had to promise to give his own daughter in marriage to the Tartar chief. When he returned to his capital he had the spies killed who had gone

to Mow-tan's camp, and he took the minister who had warned him out of prison, and made him a prince.

Think of what it meant to give a Chinese princess to a Tartar chief in marriage ! These wild and barbarous people who lived in tents, who fought and robbed and had no manners, were now allies of the Chinese, and their rough chief was the son-in-law of the Emperor. Times had changed indeed ! The sons of the Tartar chief would be the grandsons of the Chinese Emperor, they would bring Chinese ideas and wisdom into the camps of the wild tribes of the west, and gradually civilize them and change their ways. That was what Kao Tsu thought as he sadly sent his daughter away to live the rough hard life of a Tartar queen ; but did he think that if the great strength of the Tartars were guided by Chinese wisdom, they would become much more dangerous enemies than ever ? However, he could not help himself, and for a while there was peace on the border.

There was another trouble in China itself that had not yet been set right. You remember that Shi Huang Ti had had all the old books of Confucius burned and had killed all the scholars who opposed his deed. There were still many people who felt very badly about this, and there were still scholars who studied, in secret, books that had been saved from the burning. People remembered the ancient wisdom and began to say to each other, "Is Kao Tsu going to bring back the Books and call the scholars to his court ?"

His ministers asked him the same question, but strangely enough Kao Tsu grew angry. "I conquered the Empire on horseback," he said, "without your Books. What need have I of them ?"

"You conquered the Empire without them, Sire," answered his counsellors, "but can you hold it without them ? Remem-

ber the famous men who did as you have done, and conquered the Empire : Tang the Perfect and Wu Wang, the son of Wen. Remember the days of Yao and Shun. Did these great kings rule without the ancient wisdom of the Books ?”

The Emperor did not answer. He neither brought back nor forbade the Books, and it was not until his son's reign that they were brought out again, copied and read, and established as the law of the land.

Kao Tsu did not reign long. He had had a hard life, fighting and ruling. An old wound that had not healed rightly made him ill. He would not take medicine nor let himself be taken care of.

“God has brought me through an infinity of work and danger,” he said, “and let me conquer the Empire. I was nobody, and He made me Emperor. If He wishes me to live or to die, He will let me know what I must do. All remedies are useless.”

Shortly after, he had to take to his bed, and he died quietly a few days later.

He had established a great dynasty, which lasted for four hundred years, that is, over twice as long as our country, the United States, has been in existence. And yet that was only one Chinese dynasty, so you can see what a very long life China has had. Except for the Tartar wars and except for one rebellion, those four hundred years were years of wealth and power and growth for China, and many important things happened.



FIRST OF ALL, the Chinese went out beyond China, for the first time in their history, and found that there were other nations in the world. Living as they did in a rich land between the ocean and the mountains, they thought that they were the only civilized people on the earth, and that they were surrounded by wild people like the Tartars, who finally would become civilized by China and submit to her government. They never knew that there was any other government or religion or art in the world beside their own. But as a matter of fact, there were two other great powers in the world, in Asia, at that time, which were not so very far from China. These were : India to the southwest beyond the great barrier of the Himalaya Mountains, and the Roman Empire, far across mountain, plain and desert, to the west. Both of these China learned about during the Han Dynasty.

It happened largely because of the Tartars. A descendant of Kao Tsu, the Emperor Wu Ti, had an entirely new idea about fighting these ancient enemies, and it was a very good idea. He and his generals decided that, instead of waiting for the Tartars to attack China and fighting them only in defense, it would be better for the Chinese to attack the Tartars and to drive them back so far from the borders that they could no longer raid and plunder. This was done, and for the first time the Emperor's armies marched beyond the Great Wall and carried the war into Tartar territory. Mow-tan was dead and his tribes had scattered again as they usually did unless they had a strong leader. In spite of one or two defeats, the Chinese drove them back again and again until they finally took refuge north of the great desert of Gobi, which was an even better barrier than the Wall. This was a very important move on the part of China for it opened the way to the west both for trade and for conquest.

Just beyond the western end of the Great Wall there had been living a tribe of people called the Yueh-chi. The Tartars had always been their enemies and a short time before Wu Ti's reign they had defeated the Yueh-chi badly, had killed their king and made a drinking cup out of his skull. This was more than the Yueh-chi could stand ; they were not strong enough to avenge the insult, so they piled their tents on great wagons, gathered together their herds of oxen and sheep and horses, and moved away, traveling slowly across Central Asia into the west to seek a safer home. Wu Ti heard of this and, knowing how the Yueh-chi hated the Tartars, he thought that they would be good allies. He wanted them to come back to their old home and help him to hold the Tartars back. He called for a volunteer to follow the Yueh-chi and to carry to them his invitation and the promise of his protection and friendship if they returned. This was in 138 B.C.

A strong and cheerful young officer, named Chang Kien, offered to go. He was given a caravan of a hundred men and of many animals, and with his own servant, who was a Tartar, he set forth beyond the western borders. It was a long time before he was heard of again.

He had hardly gone beyond the end of the Wall and entered the wide regions of northwestern Kansu, when a roving band of Tartars caught him and carried him captive to their domains north of the desert.* There he was held for ten years in easy captivity, for he was given a wife and a tent and probably hunted and roamed and fought with the Tartars like one of them. He was frank and trusting and strangers liked him. After ten years, when his captors had almost forgotten that he was a prisoner and did not watch him carefully, he

* Look at the map between pages 147 and 148.

and his faithful servant, Kan Fu, escaped on swift horses and made their way back nearly to the place where he had been caught. One might think that after so long an absence, while he was still near China, he would turn back home ; but not he ! His Emperor had given him a message to deliver, and although they were now two instead of a hundred, Chang Kien and Kan Fu turned their faces resolutely toward the unknown lands of the west to find the Yueh-chi.

He left no detailed account of his journey but we know that to cross Central Asia is still one of the most dangerous and difficult things in the world to do, unless you go by one of the big caravan routes that have now been open for two thousand years. In Chang Kien's times there were no roads. He went north of the Tien Shan, the Heavenly Mountains, and he probably found his way by the sun and stars and by asking the shepherd folk whom he met now and then on the lonely journey. In the middle of such a big continent as Asia there is very little water, and all creatures, plants and animals and men, need water in order to live. The traveler must go day after day over wide, lonely plains where the wild ass and the antelope flee before him ; over terrible deserts of gravel or of sand where nothing can live, and where he may die of thirst or hunger ; he travels beside the most magnificent mountains in the world, whose steep dazzling snow-peaks pierce the sky ; he finds shelter at oases or in watered valleys where men can herd their flocks or raise grain and fruit-trees. Sooner or later he must cross the mountains by some bleak pass where, day after day, the weary feet of men and animals find only rocks or ice to rest upon, and where they may perish of cold at night. It is not a kindly land ; its peaks and its wide plains seem to lift themselves to heaven, taking no notice

of the tiny creatures who struggle across them for some curious human reason ; all its ways are marked with the bones of men and horses and camels.

Chang Kien was cheerful and trusting ; Kan Fu was a clever archer whose arrows brought down game when there was no other food. They made their way past the Tien Shan into the land between the Pamir Highlands and the Caspian Sea. There great surprises awaited them. Broad plains and fertile lands lay before them, where people raised grain and lived in houses and in cities. The rivers ran westward into an unknown sea. So China was not the only civilized nation on earth ! They went into Ferghana, a land just on the other side of the mountains, and asked for the Yueh-chi. Between the Tartar language and the sign-language they made themselves understood. They were told that the Yueh-chi were living in Bactria, by the Oxus river, a little farther west.

Thither they went and found the lost tribes settled in a safe and fertile land. Chang Kien delivered the Emperor's message. No, said they, they had no desire to return to a barren and dangerous country to please the Chinese. They were very comfortable and meant to stay where they were. Chang Kien's errand had failed, but he was beginning to see that he had accomplished far more than he had been sent to do. He kept his eyes and ears open and spent the better part of a year traveling about and asking questions. He was China's Marco Polo, who brought to his country news of the rest of the world.

They went back the southern way, through Kashgar and Khotan, and came in sight of China. Again they were caught by Tartars and their hearts must have sunk as they traveled over the weary desert again to Tartary. This time they escaped after a year, and finally reached the fertile and peaceful

borders of the Middle Kingdom in 126 B.C., twelve years after they had first set out.

Chang Kien was received with great honor at the court and given the title of the "Great Traveler." You can imagine how eagerly the Emperor and all the courtiers listened to his tale.

"West of the Great Mountains," said he, "are countries where men have fixed homes and cultivate the ground. There is Ferghana, where they raise rice and wheat and where they have more beautiful horses than have ever been seen in the Middle Kingdom. They make wine from a purple fruit that grows in clusters on a vine. See, I have brought a root of it with me, so that we may raise it here. North of Ferghana is Sogdiana, southwest is Bactria, where live the Yueh-chi. The rivers all run west into a western sea and by that sea are great countries with many rich cities. Between Bactria and the sea lies Parthia, a wide land with many cities whose people use gold and silver coins for money. And in Bactria I saw bamboo and a cloth that I knew was made in our province of Szechuan. I was much surprised and asked how these things had come so far. The trader told me that they had been brought from Shin-tu, a great and rich country far to the south. Its climate is hot and damp and its warriors ride to battle on elephants." Now Shin-tu was no other than India, which had been cut off from China for thousands of years by the Himalayas, the plateau of Tibet and the steep and unhealthy river-valleys of Burma. But Chang Kien's finding of the bamboo and cloth proved that there was a trade route between Szechuan and India, already known to the wild people who lived on the border of that province.

Wu Ti acted immediately on this new knowledge. He sent armies out into the west, well provisioned and commanded by

able generals. The many little kingdoms and wandering tribes that lived between China and the Pamir Highlands had never seen such an array. They were glad to pay tribute and to belong to the great Empire that sent forth such armies. All of what is now Chinese Turkestan was added then to the Empire of Wu Ti. This land was particularly welcome to the Chinese because it contained much jade—green, white, red and black. The city from which later the caravans started, in northwestern Kansu, was called Yu-men, the Jade Gate.

On the other side of the mountains conquest was more difficult. Just beyond the steep mountain-passes leading through the Pamir Highland lay Ferghana, the kingdom which raised the beautiful horses that Chang Kien had noticed. They may have been Arabian horses, which are far more delicate and graceful than the thickset Chinese horses or the rough, strong little Tartar steeds. The Chinese wanted some of these, but the people of Ferghana would neither sell nor give them away. So the Chinese stole some of the horses and drove them away over the mountains. The Ferghanese pursued them, killed the men and took the horses back.

This act of justice enraged Wu Ti. He sent a large army to punish Ferghana. The soldiers died by thousands of hunger and thirst and hardship and were easily defeated at the end of their terrible journey. Hardly a tenth of the men or the horses returned home. Not discouraged by this, for human life is cheap in China, Wu Ti sent out a second army of 60,000 men and 300,000 oxen. This expedition was successful; Ferghana was defeated, and sent as tribute as many of its finest horses as the Emperor desired. The victory made a great impression on the other kingdoms beyond Ferghana, who hastened to send gifts to the Chinese court, called themselves

its vassals and sent their sons to be kept as pledges of their good faith. Ambassadors came and went between them and China. They were received with honor at the Emperor's court and entertained very gaily with feasts, plays and wrestling matches. They thought the Chinese court and cities very beautiful and very magnificent and were impressed by its ceremonies and its elegance.

The way westward was wide open to the Middle Kingdom. Trade followed quickly after the armies. The Chinese produced one precious thing at that time that no one else in the world knew how to make. This was silk. Wool was known everywhere and linen and cotton were used in Rome ; in India they wove muslin as fine as cobwebs, and wool as soft as mist ; but only China had the secret of making the shining fabric that was loved the best. So everyone wanted to trade with it and caravan after caravan went out of the Jade Gate, and the long, swaying trains of camels, loaded with the precious cloth, began their slow journeys across desert and mountain. They carried furs also, and the fine iron which the Romans prized. Routes were laid out and made safe by military posts ; towns and cities grew up along them ; and they have been followed to this day.

Then, as now, there were two routes, one running north and one south of the Tien Shan mountains.* The southern route divided into two, one going north and one south of the Tarim Basin, both meeting in the fertile and beautiful land of Kashgar, which lies in the curve of the mighty horseshoe of mountain ranges that marks the western boundary of Chinese Turkestan. Thence, over the high passes of the Tien Shan, the route went through Ferghana up to Tashkend, which

*Look carefully at the map between pages 147 and 148, as you read the rest of this chapter.

was called the Stone Tower. The route that went north of the Tien Shan, through Turfan and Kuldja, ended also at Tashkend. They were met there by Parthian traders who bought their wares and transferred them to the backs of their own camels. The Parthians then carried the goods to Ctesiphon on the Tigris River, or to the Persian Gulf, where they changed hands again and went either across the Syrian Desert to Palmyra or were shipped down the Persian Gulf, around Arabia, and up the Red Sea to its northern ports, whence they were sent to Gaza, Petra or Alexandria. What a long and complicated journey, and how many different kinds of people and cities, how many different kinds of beauty were included in it ! If the wares were destined for Greece or Rome, they must go still farther, across the Mediterranean Sea.

When Rome had conquered all of the Mediterranean World, and her great Empire, stretching from Spain to Mesopotamia, lay at peace, the Han Dynasty was at the height of its power and eastern Asia, too, was at peace. China heard about the Roman Empire, and called it Ta Tsin ; Rome knew vaguely about China and named it Serica or the land of silk. Roman senators wore silken togas and the ladies of Rome particularly loved a silk gauze which was so thin that it did not hide their beauty. The Romans thought well of the Chinese and believed them to be civilized, just, peace-loving and honest ; China, too, respected Rome and did not expect it to become a vassal of the Middle Kingdom.

Travelers were free to come and go between all the countries of Europe and Asia, and yet the Romans and the Chinese never traded directly with each other. The Parthians did not want them to, for the Parthians handled all the profitable trade between the east and west, and they did not want to lose it. During the later years of the Han Dynasty, in 97 A.D.

a famous general named Pan Chao brought his victorious armies nearly as far as the Caspian Sea. From there he sent an envoy, Kan Ying, to visit the land of Ta Tsin, of which he had heard so much. Ta Tsin meant the Roman province of Syria. Kan Ying got as far as the Western Sea, which was probably the Persian Gulf, but there the Parthians cleverly kept him from going any farther. "The sea is vast and great," they said to him, "it is possible with good winds to cross it in two or three months, but it often takes three years to return. Besides, there is something about the sea which makes men homesick, and several have lost their lives in that way. Of course," said one, with a shrug of the shoulders, "if the envoy of Han has no mother nor father, no wife nor children, to long for and to return to, he may go safely." He could have said nothing that would have touched the heart of a Chinese more than this; Kan Ying turned back and told Pan Chao that the journey was too long and dangerous to be practicable; better let things remain as they were. So the Parthians kept the valuable trade in their own hands, buying silk, furs and iron from the Chinese and paying them with glassware from Syria, jewels, coral, perfumes and incense, asbestos, cloth, dyes, and gold and silver coin.

The hidden routes to India out of Szechuan were also explored, though it was very hard to reach India by land. While China got trade from Rome, from India it got something very different. Under the Emperor Ming Ti, in 67 A.D. the religion of the great Indian teacher, Buddha, was brought into China and it was believed by a great many people there, and is still the faith of many millions of Chinese. This led to a closer acquaintance with India, for teachers and pilgrims traveled back and forth between the two countries and the acquaintance was a very important one for China.



Besides Buddhism, another religion grew up in China at this time. The teachings of Confucius and of Lao-tse were different in a good many ways, as you may remember. While Confucius taught a strict obedience to the Li, all the ceremonies and relationships of life, Lao-tse taught that one should reach beyond these to the Tao,* and that by knowing the Tao, all things are made possible. Although most people had followed the way of Confucius, some had believed in Lao-tse and had practised his teaching, hard as it was. They had tried to find the Tao ; they believed that when they knew it they could do anything ; and they had disciplined themselves until they had developed certain powers of the mind and the body that are very little known in the West, but are very well known in India and in many parts of the East. These men lived like hermits in the beautiful mountains of China ; they believed in all the spirits of nature and told delightful stories about them. They are called Taoists.

* See page 47.

The men who really did this were men of fine mind and understanding but, as happens in all religions, there were people who believed in Lao-tse's teachings but could not follow them. Instead of disciplining themselves and seeking the Tao, they took up magic and trickery, and made people think that they were very wonderful. They said that they could make themselves invisible and walk on water and drive away demons and live forever. Perhaps some of them could. The Chinese, who have always believed in magic and demons, were very ready to be taken in by these Taoists, and called them in to drive away ghosts and to heal sickness. Two of the things the Taoists claimed that they could do were to turn any metal into gold and to prepare a drink that would make people live forever. This sort of drink is called the elixir of life.

During the Han Dynasty this religion grew very strong and was formed into a church, with gods and temples and saints and a high-priest at its head. Many of the emperors believed in it and asked the help of the priests in one way or another. Wu Ti, like Shi Huang Ti, wanted to live forever ; he called the priests to his court, paid them great honor and asked them to prepare the elixir of life for him. Some of the wiser men in the Emperor's court hated to see their fine ruler fooled by these magicians and they told him so, but he paid no attention to them.

Finally the elixir was ready ; the Emperor wanted to drink it with great ceremony, amidst his court. So he sat on his throne, with his ministers and courtiers around him, and the Taoist priest came forward, clad in fine robes embroidered with magic symbols, and, kneeling, offered him the cup. Just as the Emperor put out his hand to take it, a courtier stepped forward, seized the cup, and drank every bit of the liquid

in it. There was shouting and confusion. "What insolence!" "Kill the traitor!" "Down with him!" And the man was seized and brought to his knees before the throne. "How could you dare to do such a thing?" asked the Emperor with stern anger. "Did you not know that you would be put to death at once?" "If the cup that I have drunk is truly the elixir of life," answered the fearless courtier, "your Majesty cannot put me to death, for I shall live forever. And if it is not, I am glad to give my life to prove to your Majesty how false and mischievous these magicians are who are deceiving you." The Emperor spared his life, and did not honor the magicians so much after that. But he still believed in them.



ALTOGETHER a great many things happened during the Han Dynasty, and it was a time of growth and glory. In Wu Ti's and in Pan Chao's time, China ruled Asia from the Pacific Ocean to the Caspian Sea and from the Great Wall to Tonkin. All the southern provinces from the Yangtze River to the China Sea, including the sea-port of Canton, became for the first time a part of the Empire. It was a great Empire and not all of its rulers were able to hold it together. Sometimes the western kingdoms rebelled and freed themselves, and the Tartars rode over the borders. But on the whole, the four centuries of Han rule were peaceful and the name and fame of China were known far and wide.

And these centuries of peace gave the people a chance to develop their arts and their industries. In cities and villages,

busy men bent over their beloved work, and formed and fashioned the beautiful things that later on brought traders and sailors from other countries, through every hardship, to China to admire and to buy. Pottery that later became the exquisite porcelain that all the nations sought, jades and jewels, silks and carvings of lovely design and color and workmanship—all these they loved to make.

In the first century A.D. paper was invented, and with it and the writing brush books could be made and read more easily. The old way of writing on bamboo or wooden strips was clumsy and the books were heavy and bulky; silk was sometimes used but this was rather expensive material. So people looked about for a better way, for books were very necessary to them. One man took old rags and hemp, tree-bark and worn-out fishing-nets, picked them to shreds and soaked them to a pulp in water. Then he rolled this pulp until it was very thin and dried it, and it came out smooth and strong. It was the first real paper that was ever made, for the Egyptian papyrus, though it was very useful, was not like the paper that we use now. The Chinese soon found out how to bleach and color this new material, and to prepare it for different uses, so that before very long they had excellent writing and drawing papers, and even wrapping paper and paper napkins.

When people wrote with brushes on paper, the form of the characters changed. Instead of the old round writing, they used square forms, because it was easier to use the brush that way. The round sign for the sun became a square, and so forth. The characters by this time were very complicated, and also very beautiful. Writing became a fine art, and the writer who used his brush skillfully was honored as an artist.

Books were written on long scrolls of paper. The first complete histories were written at this time. For many centuries

each Chinese state had kept a careful record of all its deeds, but now they were put together and histories of the whole land were written. On the hills and by the streams, under the trees and the bamboo groves that they loved so well, poets praised the beauty of all that they saw, and artists began to learn how to mix color and paint it on silks, so starting the great art of Chinese painting which flourished under later dynasties.

For, alas, the Han Dynasty fell, as all dynasties must, and after it came many years of civil war and discord, until peace was brought again by the Tang emperors. But the dynasty is remembered with love and with pride, and the northern Chinese still call themselves in memory of it the "Sons of Han."

忠 孝 節 義

Some Chinese characters written with a brush.



CHAPTER 10

THE PERIOD OF DARKNESS [220-590]

FOR HUNDREDS of years after the downfall of the Han dynasty, the Empire was in a turmoil, divided into different kingdoms and dynasties, one part at war with another, and parts of it completely conquered by barbarous people.

The surprising thing about China is that it lived through this sort of time, recovered, and went on again more strongly than ever. And this happened, not once, but again and again. You remember the centuries at the end of the Chou dynasty, when the feudal states fought against each other for about five hundred years. That much civil war would have ruined most countries. When the states of Greece—Athens, Sparta and Thebes—grew jealous of each other and fought for leadership, they were so weakened by their quarreling that they were easily conquered by the younger and more barbarous state of Macedonia. They lost their freedom forever and Greece no longer produced the great art and science and the high thought that it had once given to the world. But out of China's quarrels arose Shi Huang Ti, whose merciless strength

united the land again, and under the firm peace of the Hans its civilization rose again and grew greatly and prospered.

Another great danger that China lived through was the unending war with the Tartars, and more than once, being actually conquered by the Tartars. These wars, too, were enough to destroy any country, and many other nations have fallen before the attacks of such barbarian hordes. Rome, you remember, rose to its greatest power and glory during the Han dynasty. Two hundred years later, however, in the fifth century A.D. the Roman Empire was broken to pieces by the Gothic tribes who flooded into it just as the Tartars did into China. Rome fell, and as Rome, never rose again. But China, although, as you shall see, it was sometimes broken to pieces or was entirely conquered by the Tartars, always recovered, regained its lost territories, and absorbed its enemies into its own population. In fact, the strength of China may have had something to do with the downfall of Rome, for when Wu Ti took arms against the Tartars and drove them beyond the Gobi Desert, some of the tribes turned westward, and went across Asia and sought the fertile valleys and grasslands around the Caspian Sea. Later they drifted farther west, and it is thought that the Huns, who helped to drive the Goths into the Roman Empire and who terrorized Rome itself, were one of those tribes that had been driven back from the borders of the Middle Kingdom.

What was it that made China able to withstand these dangers so well? Was its civilization, its Plan of living, such a good one that it could not easily be overthrown? It seemed like a strong tree, which had been tossed and broken by many a storm, but whose roots were so deeply planted that no storm could tear them up. When the sun shone again, it put forth

new, wide branches, and flowered. And there have been many storms in its long life, and many times of sunny, flowering peace.



AFTER the Han dynasty, from 220 to 590 (remember that all our dates are A.D. now) both the evils that I have mentioned, civil war and Tartar conquest, befell China. The Empire fell first into three parts, each with a King who called himself Emperor. This lasted about sixty years and is called the "Time of the Three Kingdoms," which were the kingdoms of Wei, in the north, Shu in the west, and Wu in the south. Many exciting plays and stories are still written about this time, for the kingdoms were constantly at war and many adventurous deeds were done.

Then a dynasty arose, called the Later Tsin, which united the Empire for a short time, but which managed things so badly that soon the princes, and the members of the imperial family, were quarreling and fighting, and there was rebellion in the provinces.

Now at this time there was living at the Emperor's court a Tartar chief named Liu Yuan. You remember that Kao Tsu, the first Han Emperor, had given his daughter to Mow-tan, the Tartar King. Other emperors, in order to keep the peace, had done the same thing, and Kao Tsu's thoughts, as he sent his daughter to the Tartar camp, had been realized. Some of the descendants of Tartar chiefs and Chinese princesses were fine men, dignified, brave and intelligent. To the

fresh strength of the barbarian they added the trained mind of the Chinese. The Tartars had been well beaten and humbled by Wu Ti's drive ; ever since that time they had been vassals of the Han Empire. The chiefs often sent their sons to the Chinese court, as messengers or as pledges of their loyalty. These boys were treated like Chinese princes and were well educated ; they were taught the ceremonies, studied the Classics and learned how to write the difficult Chinese characters with brush and ink.

Liu Yuan was the direct descendant of Mow-tan and the daughter of Kao Tsu. He had taken the family name of the Hans, which was Liu, and was very proud of it. He had been brought up at the Chinese court and was a general in the Emperor's army. Other members of his family were at court, including his son, Liu Tsung. Liu Tsung was brave and clever ; he knew the Classics well, but he had kept his Tartar strength of body and his skill with the bow and arrow.

"Now that the princes of Tsin are at each other's throats," said Liu Tsung to his father, "is it not a good time for us to get up out of the mud in which we have been lying ? Since the Hans fell, no one has paid any attention to our people. We have neither name nor honor and there is not an inch of ground that we can call our own."

Father and son called the northern tribes to come to them. They easily conquered Shansi and Chihli. Liu Yuan called himself the King of Han. A little while later he took the old capital, Loyang, and still later Chang-an. Then he called himself Emperor, and he lived in the palace and put his Tartar horsemen to work on the farms. Nothing was greatly changed ; the Chinese stayed where they were, the Lius ran the government and their army and followers settled on the land. They were better rulers than the Later Tsin Emperors

had been and ruled according to Chinese tradition, sacrificing to their Han ancestors and considering themselves the successors of Yao and of Shun. The dynasty of the Later Tsin moved south, across the Yangtze River, and made their capital in Nanking. The great river was a powerful barrier and China was divided by it into two empires.

The Chinese say that "China is a great sea which makes all the waters salty that flow into it." That means that even the people who conquer it become a part of it and become Chinese themselves. This was true of the Tartar dynasties which held northern China from 300 to nearly 600.

When his father died, Liu Tsung became Emperor of the north. He ruled like any Chinese monarch and had his ministers and his armies. But as time went on, he grew proud and cruel. He killed people who did not do as he liked. One of his officers served him some shrimps that were not to his taste, and another was late in carrying out an order. Both of them were killed in his presence. One of his ministers protested against these deeds, and Liu Tsung had him thrown into prison. Then two members of his own family, his Prime Minister and one of his generals, had their coffins made and when these were ready, asked for an audience. They bowed to the ground before their Emperor and gave him a paper on which they had written very clearly what they thought of his actions.

"We know what we have to fear," they said, "our coffins are at the door. But we would not be worthy to belong to your august family or to be your officers if the fear of death kept us from our duty."

Liu Tsung read the paper and looked up furiously. "Do you mean to tell me," he cried, "that I am like Kieh, or Chow Sin?" They knelt before him and pleaded with him, the

tears in their eyes. He sat in a black silence for some time and then said, "I have been like a drunken man. I am not really cruel, but if you had not had the courage to speak as you have spoken today, I might have gone on forever doing such things." He dismissed them and later sent them rich gifts and freed the minister whom he had put in prison and rewarded him. Are these Tartars that we are reading about ?

He wanted to build a beautiful palace for his wife (whom he loved very dearly) although he had many palaces already. One of his ministers thought that this was extravagant and told him so. His old cruel temper returned and he ordered the minister to be killed. His wife, however, heard of this, and she wrote a letter to her lord. "All the ills of our country," she wrote, "have come because of women. I do not want it said of me that the people have been burdened for my sake. It would be better to kill me in this palace than to build me a new one." The Emperor yielded ; the minister was set free and the palace was not built. Was it a Tartar princess who had taken brush and paper and written so fine a letter ?

After this dynasty of Han Tartars, other tribes swept in and in their turn conquered and ruled northern China. The plains of Mongolia and of Turkestan were swarming with different tribes of these rough horsemen. They grew like clouds, driven by a steady wind westward and southward. Still another horde, the Toba Tartars, came in and conquered. They became even more Chinese than the Hans. The Tartar language and dress were forbidden ; the Emperor invited Chinese scholars to his court, built a college at Loyang, and collected a splendid library of history. He sent ambassadors as far as Tashkend and added many miles to the Great Wall to keep out other Tartars ! The Tobas ruled for nearly two hundred years north of the Yangtze. These Tartar dynasties left their

mark on the country, of course. The language and the character of the northern people were changed because so many Tartars lived among them for so long. The south, on the other hand, remained untouched by them, and its language is more purely Chinese.

South of the Yangtze, at Nanking (which means the "Southern Capital") four or five Chinese dynasties followed one another and ruled fairly peacefully. Although this time is often called the "Period of Darkness," it was not a wholly dark time. The southern provinces, down to the sea, had been added to the Empire during the Han dynasty and proved to be a very valuable part of the country. The magnificent and fertile valley of the Yangtze was cultivated more and more; precious minerals were discovered in the southern mountains, and useful products in their forests. The beauty of this warmer climate, and the splendid scenery, inspired poets and artists who were welcomed and encouraged at the court in Nanking. And other important things happened.



YOU REMEMBER that in the reign of the Han Emperor, Ming Ti, the religion of Buddha was brought into China. The coming of this religion was very important to the life and to the art and the thought of China, but as it took nearly two hundred years to become firmly rooted there, our study of it belongs to this chapter, rather than to the last.

Ming Ti, so they say, had a dream in which he saw a golden man, with a light around his head, standing in the west.

This dream meant to him that there was a great teacher in the western lands who could bring light to China, so he sent messengers to find out who the teacher was and to bring back whatever knowledge he had to give. The envoys went out of the Jade Gate and over the barren plains of the Southern Route. From Khotan they turned south into India and soon found Buddhist temples and priests. Two of these priests agreed to go back to China with them, bringing images of Buddha and enough books so that they could teach their religion to the Chinese. Ming Ti received them with honor and built them a little monastery near Loyang, where they could live and translate their books into Chinese. Their dwelling was named the "White Horse Monastery" after the faithful little horse who had carried the holy books and images on his back over desert and mountain.

Buddhism seems very different from the religion of China. Buddha was an Indian prince whose heart was deeply troubled by the suffering that he saw in the world. He left his father's palace, and his lovely wife and little son, he left all the joy and power and pleasure that were his, and went to a lonely place to find an answer to the problem of life. After purifying his heart and thinking and meditating for many years, he found his answer. He found that if he gave up all the things that his self wanted, no sorrow or pain could touch him, and he found besides that there was a great happiness and knowledge and freedom that was open to him then, that nothing could take away from him. Other people have found this same answer and this same happiness. The Chinese call it "being one with the Tao;" Christians call it "the presence of God," or "the Kingdom of Heaven;" Buddhists call it "Nirvana."

"This is the state of mind," said Buddha, "of one who knows

that there is no self, and that the cause of his troubles, cares and vanities is a shadow and a dream. Happy is he who has overcome all selfishness ; happy is he who has attained peace ; happy is he who has found the truth. The truth is noble and sweet ; the truth can deliver you from evil." This truth could only be found by overcoming one's self, by living purely and lovingly, doing no harm to any creature, and by right thinking and meditation. When Buddha found it, he went into the world again, and taught it to other people.

He believed that all creatures, plants and animals as well as men, really want this higher life and will finally grow into it. "Truly, trees and plants, rocks and stones, all will enter Nirvana." It takes a long time to do this, and one human lifetime is not nearly long enough. Buddha taught what the Hindu people have always believed : that after death a person is born again into the world, in another body, and so goes on in life after life until he becomes wise and pure enough to enter Heaven. If he lives one life badly, he will have to pay for it in the next one, but if he lives well, he will be born in a happier state the next time, for life unfolds according to eternal laws, and a man must reap that which he has sown.

Now the quickest way to grow in spirit, according to the teaching of Buddha, was to do as he had done : to give up one's family and home, one's property and all worldly desires, and to become a monk or a nun. The monks lived very simply and did not marry ; they wore a yellow robe and carried a wooden bowl in which they begged their food from anyone who would give it to them. Their work was to purify themselves, to be kind and merciful to all living creatures, to teach the Law of Buddha, and to seek, through quiet meditation, to reach Nirvana.

This was not unlike the religion of the Taoists, but it is very

different from the religion of the Classics. The Chinese Plan was to make this life and this world perfect, to make every relationship and detail harmonious and beautiful. Confucius taught his people to be good sons and brothers and good citizens; he said nothing about any life but this life. And here was a religion which told them to leave the world that they loved, to leave their families and their homes and their state, and to seek perfection outside this life entirely!

Nevertheless, the new religion grew slowly but steadily. Perhaps it gave them something that their own religion did not have, that they really needed, for, after all, there is something in us all which does not belong to our family or to our country.

The teaching of Buddha, like that of Lao-tse, is very easy to understand and very hard to practise. A good many people find it very hard to purify themselves in life after life and so to reach Nirvana, and so some Buddhist priests, in order to make it more easy and pleasant, taught that Nirvana was a very lovely Paradise, where lotus flowers grew in quiet lakes, and that there were holy beings who would help people to find it. In fact, if one called often enough on the names of these holy ones, one would surely go to Paradise. Buddha had said nothing like this, but this was the kind of Buddhism that was taught in China, and it was a very comforting kind of religion to people who could not understand the simpler and the harder way.

The Chinese believed in life after death, but they had no very clear idea of what that life might be. Buddhism gave it to them. They had no merciful or loving gods, but the Buddhists told them that the heavenly beings who would help them get to Paradise gave their lives to save the souls of men. They had once been men and women themselves and they had

lived such pure and perfect lives that they were ready to enter Nirvana. When they were about to do so, however, they looked back and saw the sorrow of the world, and giving up their own bliss came back to help all men to reach it too. They vowed that they would never taste that bliss until they had saved every human being that was in the world. These gracious and compassionate beings who had known human life and yet were far higher and more powerful than men, were much loved by the Chinese, especially one who is called Kwan-yin, the Goddess of Mercy. Her name means "she who looks down and hears the cries of the world."

In her images Kwan-yin * is shown as a graceful woman in flowing robes, holding in one hand a vase full of the healing dew of Heaven and in the other a willow twig. Her face is kind and peaceful. Kwan-yin can save one from any danger ; if the sailors in a storm-tossed ship call upon her, she will bring them safe to port ; she will bring one through fire, and her power can turn aside swords and spears and stop the mouths of wild beasts. She has vowed never to taste the joys of Heaven until all human souls have been saved ; she cares for the world as a mother cares for her children.

A man who had always devoutly worshipped Kwan-yin was once caught by soldiers and beaten until he was nearly dead ; he remembered the goddess, a little wooden image of whom he had at home, and called to her for help. He was sentenced to have his head cut off ; still calling upon Kwan-yin in his heart, he knelt to receive the blow. Three times the executioner swung his sword and struck, but the sword seemed to lose its power in mid-air and did not touch the man's neck. The soldiers, amazed at the miracle, freed him and let him go, and he went quickly home to give thanks to Kwan-yin. As

* Her picture is on page 163.

he bowed before the image, he saw that on its wooden neck there were three fresh cuts, and he understood that the goddess herself had stood between him and the sword and had taken the strokes upon her own invisible body, for him. Many such stories are told about her, and prayers rise to her from every part of China.

Another thing that Buddhism gave was beauty and richness of worship. The Chinese sacrificed to their gods on open altars, as you know, and made no images. But as Buddhism grew, beautiful temples were raised by its followers. In them were statues of quiet-eyed saints, gleaming in the light of many lamps, and dimmed by the pale blue smoke of incense. Priests chanted long hymns and portions of the Law and the deep tones of bronze gongs quivered in the air. Here was beauty that fed the souls of many people. And the monasteries gave to China a sort of life that it had not had before.

It was not until two hundred years after the time of Ming Ti that any Chinese was allowed to enter a monastery. The many people who believed in the teachings of Confucius thought that it was very wrong for men and women to leave their homes and all their duties in order to find Nirvana, but so many people believed in the religion of Buddha and wanted to leave the world that permission was given in 325 for monasteries to be built and for the Chinese to become monks, if they wished to. Buddhism was welcomed by the Tartars, for their own religion was very childish and they were glad to find a better one; so the new faith took root both north and south of the Yangtze. Monasteries were built in beautiful places; a favorite place was the top or the side of some high mountain. There, overlooking wide plains, or range on range of other mountains, surrounded by forest, quiet save for the sound of falling water or the wind in the trees, lovely build-



KWAN-YIN GODDESS OF MERCY

ings were put up, with wide terraces and courtyards, and flights of steps connecting one building with another up the hillside. They had delightful names: "The Rock of the Peaceful Mind," "The Voice of the Waters," "Halfway to the Sky," "The Sleeping Clouds." Buddha taught that no creature must be killed or hurt and Buddhists eat no meat. So the monasteries were often sanctuaries for all wild creatures, and even fishes were taken from the mountain streams, and put in the courtyard pools, to keep them safe from hook and net. Poets and painters found on these peaceful mountainsides fit places for their work, and many people joined the monasteries because they were tired of the world, or because they wanted to give their whole time to the inner life of the spirit, and to find God.



Just as the opening of the trade routes had led men out from China and showed them the civilized countries of western Asia, so Buddhism led to much interesting travel back and

forth from India. In spite of the difficulty of the journey, teachers came from India to help to establish the new faith, and pilgrims and students went there to visit the holy places.

In 399 a Chinese monk named Fa-hien, and a few comrades, decided to go to India in order to find better books and a fuller account of the Law than those which they had. They started out by the Southern Route, which was not much used in those days, for Turkestan was in the hands of Tartar tribes, and there was not much trade. Fa-hien had lived all his life in a quiet monastery and he writes bitterly of the hard journey through the Tarim Basin. "There are no birds flying above us," he says, "and no beasts roaming about on the earth. When we look ahead, searching as far as the eye can reach for our onward route, there is nothing to guide us but dead men's decaying bones, which show us our path." And again he says, "The sufferings of the journey on account of the difficulties of the road and the lack of water are beyond human power to describe."

They went on, however, slowly, finding that all the little kingdoms of Turkestan had turned Buddhist, so that they were received kindly by priests all along the road. Beyond Khotan they turned south, taking a month to cross the high mountains where "there is snow both in winter and summer. Moreover there are poison dragons, who spit poison, winds, rains, snow, drifting sand and gravel stones. Not one out of ten thousand, meeting these calamities, escapes." Nevertheless, when they had braved these dangers and arrived fairly in India, what wonderful sights awaited them! Chang Kien did not have such tales to tell as Fa-hien had! Since he was a pilgrim, he was most interested, of course, in the places that had to do with his religion. Everywhere he found priests, everywhere temples and towers that were built to mark some

place where Buddha himself had been. Here, the priests told him, Buddha had come, and on going away, had left the print of his foot in the rock. To a man of little faith, the foot-print looked small, but to one who believed, the print was very large. In another place Buddha had left his shadow in a cavern.

One of the kingdoms of northern India had the begging-bowl that the Blessed One had carried. A king of the Yueh-chi, who was a Buddhist, had wanted to take this bowl away one time and to keep it in his own country. So he made war on the kingdom, and having subdued it, he ordered an elephant to be richly dressed, placed the bowl on its back and prepared to leave. But the elephant fell to the ground and could not move. The king ordered a four-wheeled carriage to be made, and yoked to it eight elephants. The humble wooden bowl was placed upon the carriage, but eight elephants could not draw it a foot forward! Then the king was much ashamed and understood that he was not worthy to have the bowl and that holy things cannot be taken by force. He built a beautiful tower over it and left it where it was. Incense was burnt before it and flowers thrown into it as offerings. The people told Fa-hien that when poor people with humble hearts offered just a few flowers, the bowl was filled with them, but that when rich and proud people came, even when they poured baskets full of flowers into it, the bowl was not full.

Fa-hien visited the birthplace of Buddha, and the place where he had left the world, and best of all, the spot where, sitting under the sacred Bo tree, he had found his answer, and reached the highest wisdom.

All these things and many others, Fa-hien saw, and he remained for six years in India, going from the northern kingdoms by the Indus River, across the land to the kingdoms that were on the Ganges. He found the books that he wanted,

copied them all carefully, and made drawings of many images. Some of his companions had died, some stayed in India, but Fa-hien wanted to carry out his plan and to take his books back to China. He took passage on a merchant vessel that was sailing from the mouth of the Ganges and after two weeks arrived in Ceylon. There, all alone, he felt himself very far from home. In a temple he saw a merchant presenting as an offering to the god a white Chinese fan. Fa-hien's home-loving Chinese heart was touched and the tears flowed down his cheeks. He stayed in Ceylon for two years, however, finding and copying more of the books that he was looking for, that were unknown in China.

Finally, when he had all that he wanted, he took ship again and sailed northeastward for home. The China seas are very dangerous and tempests often arise there. Fa-hien's ship met a hurricane that blew for thirteen days and nights; the ship sprang a leak and the cargo was thrown over. Fa-hien, afraid lest they should want to throw over his precious books, hugged them to him and prayed to Kwan-yin, "I have wandered far and wide in search of the Law. Oh, bring me back again, by your spiritual power, to some resting-place." The sailors nearly threw him overboard, thinking that a priest brought them bad luck, but at last, after nearly three months, when food and water had nearly given out, they arrived in northern China, at a port in Shantung. It had taken him six years to reach India, and he had stayed there six years; from India, counting his stay in Ceylon, he had traveled for three years, so that fifteen years had gone by since he had seen his own land. The books and images that he had brought were copied and used, and his pilgrimage was such a wonderful one that he wrote a book about it and about all that he had seen.

Fa-hien had come back on a trading ship, for there was

trading now by sea as well as by land. After the southern provinces of Kwangtung and Kwangsi had been conquered under the Hans, the city of Kwangtung which we call Canton, became an important sea-port. Chinese vessels went to India and to Ceylon ; Indian and Arab ships came to Canton, bringing perfumes and rugs, jewels and incense, glass and cotton cloth. The use of tea was discovered during these centuries of "darkness" and it gradually became as profitable a thing to trade as silk. I must tell you a story about the discovery of tea, which cannot be true, as you will see, but the story and the person about whom it is told are so well known that you must hear it.

In about 525 there came to China, by sea from India, a very wise teacher of the Law, named Bodhidharma. The Chinese, who always have trouble with foreign names, called him Tamo and so we shall call him. He came to the imperial court at Nanking, and the Emperor, who was an ardent Buddhist, welcomed him eagerly.

"I have built many temples, and have had many of the holy books translated and copied," he said to the holy man ; "have I not done much good ?"

"You have done no good at all," answered Tamo shortly.

"What, then, is good ?" asked the Emperor.

"Purity and truth, depth and fulfillment ; being wrapped in thought in the midst of stillness," answered the holy man. "These cannot be reached by building temples or translating books."

He found that in the south people were too much given to book-learning. "You cannot find Buddha in books," he said. "Look into your own heart. That is where you will find Buddha. All knowledge comes from one's own heart ; from it can be brought forth unspeakable treasures."

He left them and went north. When he reached the Yangtze, he picked a reed from its banks, and flung it upon the water. Stepping on it, he crossed the broad river safely and continued his journey up to Loyang, where he was gladly received by the Tartar Emperor. He stayed at Loyang and they say that he sat for nine years with his face to a wall, in meditation.

Now it is a very hard thing to meditate. It is hard to think, but to meditate is much harder. One must sit, straight, and yet relaxed and comfortable, so that one can forget one's body. The Hindu people sit with crossed legs and with their hands resting quietly in their laps. One must shut one's eyes and shut, so to speak, all one's senses, so that no sound or touch can disturb one. Then, harder still, one must quiet one's thoughts and feelings until, inside one's self, there is silence. Then, people who know how to meditate tell us that in that silence we become aware of other ways of knowing, other faculties than those we usually use, and that the things that we can learn in that way are more important than anything that we can learn with our eyes or our ears or our thoughts. It is then that the "unspeakable treasures" of the heart are found. If you try just the first part of it, just getting quiet inside, you will see how hard it is.

Now Tamo knew very well how to meditate. He could meditate for hours, day after day. But the story says that once, as he was sitting very still his head fell forward and he realized, to his horror, that he had fallen asleep. He was so angry with himself that he took a knife and cut off his eyelids and threw them away, so that he could never fall asleep again. Next day, when he came back to the same place to meditate, he noticed that two little bushes had sprung up in the place where he had thrown his eyelids. He picked their pretty

green leaves curiously and finally tasted them. They had a spicy and refreshing taste and he noticed that he felt very wide-awake and alert after he had eaten them. So he often ate the leaves of these bushes and so did other people, for from Tamo's eyelids had sprung up the tea plant! You will see many pictures of Tamo in China and in Japan, too, where he is called Daruma, and you will see that he is always painted with big staring eyes that have no lids.

However it may have been discovered, tea quickly became the favorite thing to drink, and the pretty shrubs were grown on farms and hill-sides in the central and northern provinces. The first tender leaves were carefully picked in the early spring and these made the most exquisite teas. Twice more during the spring the girls and women filled their baskets with the leaves, dried them and rolled them and sent them all over the country to be turned into the fragrant, steaming drink that the Chinese loved so well. The neighboring countries loved it too, and tea-boxes were added to the loads of the patient camels who went out west and northward along the caravan routes.



THE PERIOD of darkness and division came to an end in 589. A Chinese, who was Prime Minister to a weak Tartar emperor, overthrew the northern dynasty, and shortly afterwards defeated the southern emperor also. So, for the first time in three hundred years, the whole country was united under a Chinese ruler. The man who did all this, however, whose name was Wen Ti and whose dynasty is called the Sui, was

not a man of fine enough character to bring the country back to real unity and peace again, nor was his son, Yang Ti. The man who could do that was yet to come. But these two Sui emperors, though they were not great rulers, are remembered for one great work that they accomplished. This was the building of the Grand Canal, which now runs from Tientsin to Hangchow, a distance of about 650 miles.

There are many rivers in China. They are used a great deal for two things: for watering the land, so that the crops may grow, and as roads, for travel and transportation. Rivers are used more for this purpose than roads are, and the Chinese have always been splendid boatmen, skillful in shooting the most dangerous rapids, and patient in towing heavily loaded boats upstream against strong currents. Most of the rivers run from west to east into the Pacific Ocean, and so, while it was easy to go across the country on the rivers, it was almost impossible to travel north and south by water, and the great provinces and cities of the north were too much separated from those of the south. Of course, one could go by sea, but, as we have seen, the China seas are very dangerous. Therefore at one time or another, canals were cut between the great rivers, and people traveled north and south on those.

Confucius says that the marquis of Lu (Confucius' own state, you remember) was the first to build one of these waterways. In 486 B.C. he dug a canal between the Hwai and the Yangtze Rivers, a distance of about ninety miles. This was improved and kept in repair by other rulers and was much used at the time when the Sui dynasty united China. It was the beginning of the Grand Canal.

There was so much traffic on it that Wen Ti built a second canal to run parallel to it. He put 100,000 men to work on it, made it 200 feet wide, built sloping banks of stone and planted

trees along it. The ground is flat in eastern China so that there is little difficulty in constructing a canal. Where the land rises a little, the channel is dug deeper ; where the land is low, the channel is raised, sometimes twenty feet above the plain, with strong banks to keep it from overflowing, and so its course is kept level. The digging was a tremendous labor, of course, and it is said that hundreds of thousands of men died at their work, for the Emperor was a cruel task-master. However, the canal was put through, and became increasingly useful.

Yang Ti, when he came to the throne, was even a worse man than his father, but he also was a builder of canals. He realized how important the southern provinces were becoming, and he saw the need of pushing the canal southward. He called out an army of workmen ; every family must give one man, between fifteen and fifty years of age. They continued the canal from Nanking through Suchow and down to Hangchow. It was magnificently built ; its banks were faced with stone, and willows and elms were planted along its sides, partly for shade and beauty, partly to strengthen the banks with their roots. The workers again were driven with stupid cruelty and nearly half of them died at their labor. The Grand Canal and the Great Wall are two pieces of work that are still looked upon with wonder ; when they were made there was nothing else in the world, except the pyramids of Egypt, that could compare with them. Both were built by relentless masters ; beside them both many a patient, exhausted workman laid down his life.

Yang Ti took such pleasure in the Canal that he spent entirely too much time traveling up and down it. He had a boat built that was three stories high and two hundred feet long. His queen had an equally elaborate boat and nine others to

accompany her. All his ministers and officers must have boats made, to follow him when he chose to go on a pleasure trip. Generals and soldiers followed also, and the cavalry rode along the banks. When this immense procession started forth on a journey, the towns and cities along the banks groaned, for they must feed these thousands of travelers and pretend to rejoice as their Emperor visited them.

Up in the north, a very young man was looking on impatiently at all this extravagance and misrule. No matter how long disorder and turmoil may last in China, out of it a man is always born who is strong enough to master it, and to bring the country back to order and peace again. Remember Tang, and Wu Wang and his brother, Shi Huang Ti and Kao Tsu. Another such man had been born, who was to start a glorious dynasty. After a long storm, it was time for the great tree to spread out its branches in the sun again, to blossom and to bear fruit.





CHAPTER II

THE TANG DYNASTY [618-907]

ON THE RAMPARTS of a walled city in the north, a young man of twenty paced back and forth, frowning, as he thought of the news that was coming in day by day. There were rebellions in the northern provinces and robber bands roamed freely about the country ; yet the Emperor was planning another pleasure trip down the Grand Canal ! After all these centuries of division and the shame of Tartar rule, the Middle Kingdom was united under a Chinese Emperor ; but that Emperor was greedy and selfish and cruel, killing his faithful, sturdy people with overwork for his own pleasure, heedless of what happened to the great country that had been given into his care. “How can one live in the midst of such troubles ?” cried the young man, impatiently.

As he looked over the valley in which his city stood, the quiet river flowing between the fields which stretched away to the hills on either side, another picture arose in his mind. He

seemed to see the kingdom of Yao and Shun, the kingdom of Wu Wang and the Duke of Chou, the Empire of the Hans : a peaceful, busy land, its simple people singing at their work, governed so well by upright, fearless men, that they did not even know that they were governed ; the whole nation living like one big family, reverent to parents and ancestors, and watched over and cared for by the Son of Heaven, who understood the Way and who carried out humbly and wisely the great task entrusted to him by God. Then there would be no quarrels, no Tartar could defeat such a nation as that ; and the western kingdoms beyond the border, so restless, so ready to rebel, would hurry to pay homage to such an empire. How long it was since the Middle Kingdom had known that sort of rule ! And yet—it could be brought back again. The young man turned and strode down the steps of the City Wall to seek his father who was in command of the army in that province.

When he found his father, he told him that the time had come to rebel against the Emperor and that he must take the army, get some of the Tartars to help, if necessary, and march on Chang-an, the city of Everlasting Peace, and drive Yang Ti off the throne. At first the father was horrified, but was finally convinced by his son's quiet determination. "If we fail," said the father, "it will be you who ruin our family. And if we succeed, it will be you who raise it." They belonged to the family of Li. The father was the prince of Tang and the son's name was Li Shi-min. They raised an army of 30,000 men, with a company of Tartars besides, and marched toward Chang-an. A sister of Li Shi-min's, who was married to a brave captain in their army, sold all her treasures and raised an army of 10,000 men. Chinese women's feet were not bound in those days ; she put on armor and mounted a

horse and rode at the head of her men to join her father and brother.

Yang Ti was not the man to stand against such a family as this ; he fled, and Li Shi-min's father was made Emperor, giving his dynasty his own title of Tang, a name whose glory rang all over Asia and even into Europe, as you shall see. He came to the throne in 618 and it took six years to put the whole country in order. This work was entrusted to Li Shi-min, who was a brilliant general and a brave soldier. He directed the battle and also fought in the front ranks. He was just and generous in war ; defeated armies were disarmed and sent home, and the inhabitants of cities were in no way hurt.

When at last the Empire was quiet and the rule of the Tangs was accepted from the Great Wall to Canton, from the Eastern Ocean to the Jade Gate, Li Shi-min returned to Chang-an in a way that reminds one of a Roman triumph. In armor, with a silver breast-plate and a plumed helmet, surrounded by his chosen guard, who carried black tiger-skins, followed by his captives whose banners trailed in the dust behind them, he rode at the head of his army, to the sound of warlike music and the shouts of the people. After making obeisance to his father, he went out to the newly-built temple of his ancestors, offered them food and incense and knelt before them, telling them all that he had done.

It was Li Shi-min who had founded the dynasty ; it was he who had united and pacified the empire ; he alone was able to rule and to guide it. Two years after his triumphal return, his father retired from the throne and left it to this son, of whom he was so proud. Li Shi-min, who was then thirty years old, took the title of Tai Tsung, and so we must call him after this.

He called scholars and wise men to his court and talked with them every day and far into the night. With them he worked to build up the Empire according to the ancient plan, and his desire was to follow the example of the wise old kings. He believed in the teachings of Confucius and needed no other religion. "Confucius is to the Chinese," he said, "what water is to fishes." All scholars who loved the Classics rejoiced to find such a leader, and indeed the Master himself would have felt rewarded for his life's labor, if he could have seen this prince put his teachings to such splendid practice. Tai Tsung called out the honest and able men from all parts of the country and sent them to govern the provinces and the cities; but the best men of all he kept to be his ministers, to help him in the tremendous task of governing so great an empire. He was taken away from the work of peace by the call of an ancient danger.

The history of China is the history of both the Chinese people and the Tartars, and we can never forget the Tartars for long. At this time, at the beginning of the Tang Dynasty, these people had increased so and had become so well organized that they were growing into nations, and we can no longer speak of them in a general way as Tartars. In the northeast were the Cathayans; in the west and north were the Turks; up near the sources of the Amur River lived a small tribe whose people called themselves the Mongcas. One after another these bands of roving horsemen rose, conquered and then disappeared or moved on elsewhere, like clouds that follow one another, driven by the wind.

In Tai Tsung's time the Turks were masters of the northern regions, from Korea to the Caspian Sea. They boasted that they were descended from a she-wolf; they took their name

of "Turk" from a hill in the Golden Mountains that lie northwest of China ; they were iron-workers, skillful bowmen and terrible fighters.

During the first year of Tai Tsung's reign, when they thought that he would not be ready for war, a great horde of these Turks attacked the western borders, riding up nearly to Chang-an. Tai Tsung knew them well ; he and his father had guarded the western borders, and it was a band of Turks who had helped him to conquer the empire. He had made an alliance with them then. So he marched his army out of the city and drew it up in battle array, facing the Turks. Then he rode out alone, and called on the two Turkish leaders to speak with him. He looked so majestic, riding there alone before his army, that the Turks came forward, got off their horses and bowed to the ground before him. "Is this that you are doing," he cried sternly, "worthy of men who have even a spark of honor ? Even if you forget all that I have done for you, you ought not break the alliance that we made together." They were ashamed and agreed to renew it, and that very day they sacrificed a white horse, as the custom was, and over its body swore to be faithful to this new agreement.

Later on in Tai Tsung's reign, he had occasion to fight them again, and again — almost without a battle — they surrendered, so thoroughly did they respect his armies. And when the other Tartar tribes saw that the strongest among them was defeated, they all came to Chang-an and paid homage, and asked the Emperor to be their sovereign and to accept the Turkish title of "Heavenly Khan." Many Turks remained as vassals in China ; many moved on to join the western hordes and when we next hear of them it will be on the western shores of Asia, where they were destined to play an important part ; but they never troubled the Middle Kingdom again.

Now peace reigned within and without the wide borders and Tai Tsung went gladly back to the work of peace, and he strove by virtuous government and not by war, to bring order to "All that is under Heaven." He did not put his soldiers to work on public buildings, however, as was often done, but kept a strong standing army, which he trained himself, rewarding the soldiers with bows or swords when they did well. He established schools and colleges and encouraged all fine men to serve the state.

And, according to the old laws, he set the example of leadership himself. "I fear nothing," he said to his ministers, "but that joy or anger may make me reward someone wrongly or punish someone unjustly. Never hide from me my faults; feel perfectly free to tell them to me. You also must be willing to hear your own faults; for how can you correct another person, unless you are willing to be corrected yourself?" He often asked his ministers to write down what they thought of him, which they did very frankly, and the Emperor read their papers thoughtfully and profited by their advice. You can judge him as a ruler by some of the things he said:

"To rob the people in order to satisfy the greed of the sovereign is like cutting off one's own flesh to satisfy one's hunger."

"If a sovereign lies to his officers, how can he expect honesty from them? Princes are like the sources of rivers and their officers are the streams. If the source is pure, so are the streams."

When some of his ministers told him that it was dangerous to go so freely among his soldiers and among the people, he answered, "I look upon the Empire as a father does on his household, and on all my subjects as my children. I compare their heart with my own; if I love them as a father does his

children, how can I suspect them of wanting to harm me?"

He was out in a boat with his young son one time. "See, my son," he said, "the people are the water and the sovereign is the boat. When the water is calm, the boat rides safely on it, but if the waters rise in anger, they can easily overturn and destroy the boat."

Tai Tsung had a wife who was worthy of him. She was very wise, but gentle and modest and would take no part in the affairs of government. She quoted the old saying, "When the hen crows in the morning, the house goes to ruin." Nevertheless, like the wife of Suen Wang in the Chou dynasty,* she took part in her own way. One day, after an audience with his ministers, the Emperor came striding into his wife's spacious rooms, pushing aside its jeweled, silken curtains. "I shall never be the master until I get rid of that wretched man," he said angrily. "What wretched man?" asked his wife. "Wei Ching," answered her lord. "He contradicts me before everybody."

Now Wei Ching was a very fine minister of his, a man of great honesty, who always told him the truth and who had several times opposed things that the Emperor wanted to do, because he thought that those things were not wise. Tai Tsung really wanted his ministers to do this, as you know, but he was strong and proud and sometimes it irritated him. His wife did not say anything, but she went out of the room and soon returned dressed as if she were going to some great ceremony, in her beautiful court robes, the jeweled flowers of her headdress sparkling above her lovely face. She stood demurely in front of Tai Tsung and he looked at her in amazement.

"Why are you dressed so?" he asked. "I have always

* See page 83.

heard," she answered, her eyes lowered, "that a truly great emperor has sincere and honest ministers. You have Wei Ching. Is that not proof that you are a truly great emperor? I have come to congratulate you." The Emperor's anger vanished, like a cloud before a summer breeze, and after that he honored Wei Ching more than he had before. Later, when a governor was wanted for a distant province, someone suggested that Wei Ching be appointed. "No, not he," said the Emperor, "I cannot spare Wei Ching even for a day."

Now Tai Tsung's dream, as he stood on the ramparts of the northern city when he was a young man, was coming true. The country was completely at peace and all its provinces were as well governed and as prosperous as one could reasonably hope; the Tartars had not been able to defeat it and their leaders served in its armies. Its fame spread far and wide and the restless kingdoms that lay along the old caravan routes, in the west, sent ambassadors to the Emperor's court, bringing gifts and offering homage.

Strange gifts some of these were! The king of Samarcand sent two tame lions and the king of Turfan sent a little dog, six inches high and a foot long, which could lead a horse by the bridle and could hold a lighted candle in its mouth. The king of Persia sent, not as a tribute, but as a gift, a strange little animal who could follow rats into their holes and kill them. With these creatures, however, came also the rich brocades and damasks that the Persians had learned to make since they knew how to raise silk, and jades and jewelry and beautiful horses from Turkestan. Tribute came from a country north of the Caspian Sea, where the days were very long and where even at night it was not wholly dark; and an embassy came from the Roman Emperor of the East, who reigned at Constantinople. The caravan routes were open again across

the continent for trade and travel ; Chinese governors and garrisons were sent into Turkestan, and the vassal states of the Middle Kingdom reached as far as Persia and the Caspian Sea.

Meantime, on the bleak, high plateau of Tibet, a sturdy kingdom had grown up. Its king felt proud enough to send messengers to Tai Tsung asking for a Chinese princess in marriage. Tai Tsung sent his daughter to the Tibetan king, who after that copied the Chinese ways, and built his wife a walled city, as much like a Chinese city as possible. He, too, paid tribute and homage to his august father-in-law.

"Today," said Tai Tsung, with some pride, "without drawing a sword, by the power of virtue, China receives tribute from countries so far away that grass cannot grow in them."

Truly this was a glorious reign and this was a ruler worthy to be ranked with the greatest that the world has known. He failed only once and that was when he led his army into an unsuccessful war with Korea. The shame and the hardship of this campaign injured him and he grew weak and ill. Before he died, he wrote a book called the *Golden Mirror*, in which he set down all the advice that he wanted to give to his son.

"Look to the ancient kings," he said to the crown prince, "and not to princes like me. I have loved beauty and magnificence too well. I have built many palaces and sent far away for fine horses and dogs and birds of prey. Yet I have done much for my people and so they have forgiven me. Let my faults be lessons to you. Follow my instructions and live in peace. Nothing is harder than to win an empire ; nothing is easier than to lose it."

When he died, in 649, the people and all his officers and even the ambassadors from foreign lands wept as if they had lost their father and their mother. From the Pamir High-

lands to the Yellow Sea all was prosperous and at peace ; in the whole country only fifty men were in prison and only two of these were condemned to death.



NOW THE GLORY of Tai Tsung's reign lasted for a long time after his death, just as the sound of a great bell fills the air long after the tongue is still. Although there were some weak and selfish emperors who reigned after him, all of Asia looked with great respect to China. The kings of Tibet and Korea sent their sons to the imperial schools at Chang-an and copied the ceremonies of China, its family life and its plan of government. Another very important country also looked to China as its teacher. This was Japan.

From the sea-girt, pine-clad hills of the Japanese islands, it was not hard to sail to Korea, or even over to the province of Kiangsu and the mouth of the Yangtze River. First through Korea, then directly from China itself, Japan learned its writing, its government, its ceremony and its arts. Even the beautiful dress that the Japanese wear now was copied from the court costume of the Tang dynasty, while the Chinese fashion has changed very much since that time. Buddhism was carried to Korea and Japan and so the three countries were bound together by the same religion and the same arts.

In western Asia, at this time, the Arabs, inspired by their prophet Mohammed, had risen to power. Mohammed and Tai Tsung lived at the same time. After the prophet's death, in 632, the Mohammedans came forth from Arabia like a

whirlwind and conquered Syria and Mesopotamia and the rich and powerful empire of Persia. They made their capital at Bagdad on the Tigris River and took for themselves the treasure and the wide trade of Persia. The *Arabian Nights* are written about this time; the Caliph Haroun-al-Raschid sent friendly embassies to the Tang emperors. The small Arab ships came from the mouth of the Euphrates River to Canton and many Arab merchants lived there and at Hangchow. Jews and Christians and Persians had also settled in the seaports. A relative of the Prophet's made his way to Chang-an and had an interesting talk with the Emperor. He was much impressed by the order and justice in China and by their skill in all handiwork. "Among all the men whom God has made," he wrote later, "the Chinese have the most skill with their hands, in drawing and in every sort of craft."

Chinese ships, much heavier than those of the Arabs and armed against pirates, sailed to Ceylon and around India to the ports at the mouth of the Euphrates, carrying their silks and their handiwork to trade with the western nations. In Europe, at this time, there was still darkness and confusion. The modern nations of Europe were just rising out of the turmoil that followed the downfall of the Roman Empire. In 800, when the Tang dynasty was at its height, Charlemagne had raised his country out of barbarism, but most of Europe was ignorant and uncivilized and filled with warfare, while in both the eastern and the western parts of Asia, there was peace and wealth, learning and art. It is much easier to copy a man's faults than it is to copy his virtues. The love of beauty and magnificence which Tai Tsung had confessed to his son on his deathbed, belonged to many other emperors of Tang. They had forgotten the old saying of Yao's time, "Lofty roofs and carved walls bring the house to ruin."

Palaces and pleasure-gardens fit for fairy kings and princesses were raised and the houses of wealthy families and of high officers were nearly as fine. In their gardens and courtyards grew pines and willows, the flowering cassia and fruit trees that were loved for their blossoms ; wistaria and honeysuckle hung in the arbors, while roses and lilies and that queen of flowers, the peony, and hundreds of others were tended by loving gardeners and bloomed in their seasons. Bathing pools and fish pools were fed by little streams, arched by carved stone bridges, and paths led to stone seats set in the cool shade, or through doors that were round and flower-shaped, to other gardens and to other delights. Through the courtyards, down the wide steps, along the terraces and in the gardens strolled the lord and his courtiers, and bands of girls with musical instruments, ready to play and to sing. And indeed, every educated person could play an instrument and sing, and write a graceful poem with skillful strokes of the brush. Everyone, even the peasant in his fields, dressed in lovely colors ; the farmer in his blue clothes, the richer folk in silken robes whose colors were as fresh as those of flowers.

When there was a feast or a great ceremony at the capital, and in the evening the palace terraces and gardens were hung with glowing lanterns, when music from stringed and wind instruments, from bells and drums, filled the fragrant air, probably no more fairy-like scene has been known on our earth. Boats carved in the shape of dragons, painted in many colors and hung with lanterns, rowed across the lakes to flowery islands. There, in dainty pavilions hung with bells that rang in the wind, the guests sipped tea or wine and talked about the beauty of the night or the latest scandal in the palace. And it was not only in palaces that people enjoyed themselves,

but in the humblest homes, also ; for no one has surpassed the Chinese in the arts of beauty and of pleasure.

The Emperor Ming Huang built a college of music and drama, which was called "The Pear Garden," in which both men and women could study. He himself had an orchestra of five or six hundred instruments, arranged in a square and led by a conductor as orchestras are today. Great painters decorated the walls of his palaces and poets came to his court. It was this same Ming Huang who nearly lost his throne because he loved beauty too well in the shape of his lovely concubine, Yang Kwei Fei.

She was so beautiful that if she powdered her face it was too white and if she touched it with rouge it was too red, for it was perfect as it was. Her eyebrows curved like willow boughs and her teeth were white as jasmine flowers ; her hair was like a cloud and her face like a flower, and she needed no perfume, for her body was as fragrant as a rose. She was jealous and petulant, an excellent musician and dancer, and so charming that she could make the Emperor do anything that she wanted. He built fine houses for her sisters, who were lovely and mischievous young ladies ; he kept hundreds of maidens in the palace, only to prepare her dresses and to embroider on them different flowers for each season ; he kept relays of horsemen galloping from the south to bring her the lichee nuts that she loved.

After twenty years of this, a revolt led by a Tartar officer nearly overturned the throne. Death and devastation entered the northern provinces for the first time in many years, and thousands of men were killed and cities were destroyed as the revolt swept on. The people mobbed the Emperor's palace and demanded that he attend to his duties and that Yang Kwei Fei be put to death. The Emperor was powerless and

his lovely favorite, graceful and charming to the end, took the long silken cord that was sent to her for the purpose and hanged herself to a pear tree. The revolt was put down and the dynasty went on, but it was very much weakened by this disturbance.

Whenever there was a long time of peace, great things happened. During the Han dynasty China came to know other countries and established the caravan routes across Asia ; now after meeting with Syria and Persia and India, and taking the religion of Buddha into its life, there came a wonderful period of art. Painters, musicians and poets produced some of the most beautiful art that has ever been known. The Tang dynasty is most famous for its poetry, so we shall leave the other arts until later and for the present consider only literature.



TAI TSUNG had been a scholar and was deeply interested in schools and colleges and the emperors who came after him had kept up his work. Literature was honored, not only for its own sake, but because every man who held any government position had to pass a series of examinations in the Classics. The Classics, you remember, were the writings that Confucius

had collected: the history, poetry, ceremony and philosophy of ancient times, to which were added the sayings of Confucius and Mencius. This was a strange way to choose ministers and governors and tax collectors, was it not? No other country has ever tried such a way. It meant that the Chinese valued their literature more than anything else in the world and wanted all government officers to know and obey its teachings; it also meant that any man, rich or poor, known or unknown, could rise to the highest position in the state, if he were clever enough.

"Where there is teaching," Confucius had said, "there will be no difference of class." Any farmer's boy or shepherd lad could become Prime Minister as easily as any young prince. For there were schools in every village and town, which were not free, but very cheap, and since a successful scholar brought honor and wealth to his family, a promising boy was usually encouraged to study and helped in his schooling by some relative.

Many a poor boy rose to fame by work and perseverance. There was one whose parents were too poor to buy oil for a lamp and so he caught some glow-worms and imprisoned them in a bag of thin white cloth and studied late into the night by their dim light. Another boy, on winter evenings, read by the light of the snow outside his window. A herdboys used to tie his book to the horns of the ox on which he rode, and so kept up his study even while doing his daily work.

School hours were long, for the boys went at sunrise and stayed until evening, learning by heart long pages of the Classics and shouting them aloud as they learned, or practising with the brush the seven strokes with which they wrote the thousands of characters that they had to know. Their teachers were very strict and beat them if they did not learn well and

quickly. They say that the great philosopher, Mencius, when he was a boy, went to school for a few days and then came home one day tired of his lessons. His mother, who was busy weaving, asked him why he had returned so early. When he told her, she picked up a pair of scissors and cut the piece of cloth that she was weaving right in two. "Oh, mother!" cried the boy, "what have you done? That was such a beautiful pattern." "I have done just what you have done, my son," answered his mother. "If you leave your books, you will be cutting across the pattern of your life, just as I have cut the pattern on my loom." It was such a lesson to young Mencius, that he never left his books again and he became a very famous scholar, as you know.

The boys who did well in school took their first examination in their own prefecture, which is like one of our counties. If they passed the test, they were given a degree called "Budding Talent," and the next year they took a harder examination at the capital of their province. This is the way they took the examination: they were given two or three sentences, from the Classics; then they had to write one poem and one or two compositions or essays about those sentences, explaining them and showing by what they wrote that they knew the Classics perfectly. The examinations took several days, new sentences being given out each day. The students were locked up in a big hall and not allowed to speak to anyone or go out until their papers were finished.

If they passed the provincial tests, they won the degree of "Promoted Scholars" and then they could be given positions in the government. All those who passed, however, wanted to take the higher examinations which were held once in three years, in the capital of the Empire. This was indeed an exciting event and it was performed with much ceremony. The test

was the same — each day one must write one or two essays and a poem based on the Classics and also a paper about something that was going on at that time. This gave the scholar a chance to express his opinion about the government or art or anything that particularly interested him. The papers were read by the finest scholars in the country and only the very best were accepted.

The men who passed were called "Entered Scholars" and from them were chosen the Emperor's ministers, the governors of provinces, and heads of the departments of the government. And one of these might have been the little herdboys who tied his book to his ox's horns. Anyone could try the examinations; he could try as many times as he liked and there was no age limit. An old man with white hair might take the same test that a boy in his teens was taking.

One Tang Emperor who lived in 740 established a still higher degree than these three. Only the "Entered Scholars" might take it and only the six best papers were passed. Those six men then belonged to the Imperial Academy, which was founded "to answer the questions of the Emperor about language and literature." The Academy was called "Han Lin Yuen" which means the "Forest of Pencils" and it lasted from the Tang dynasty until this century. Its members were the Emperor's advisers on all literary matters and from them were chosen the highest examiners, the directors of education, the imperial historians and so forth. These schools and examinations were established all through the Empire, in every province and in every prefecture, and every magistrate, every officer and minister passed through them.

Now this was all very serious and practical study, but there were many scholars who cared not at all for government position or for wealth or fame, but who used the rich lan-



A SAGE

guage and wrote the beautiful characters for pure joy. Some were philosophers who read the ancient books for their wisdom and some were poets who wrote for the love of beauty. These men did not usually come to the Emperor's court or live in the big cities ; they loved to live in some quiet retreat among the hills, within sound of the wind-blown pine trees and waterfalls, or by the bank of a lake or river where the willows dipped their leaves and the bamboos swayed and whispered in the breeze.

All they wanted was a simple little house, a garden with a bamboo fence, where they could raise chrysanthemums and roses ; a little rowboat in which they could pretend to fish but from which they really watched the skimming of the swallows over the water, the lines of the mountain ranges lying one behind another, and the quiet rising of the moon ; a few friends with whom they could read and drink wine and write poetry.

Chinese poems are usually short, and they have a charming rhyme and meter that you can enjoy only if you know how to read Chinese. Remember, as you read these, that it is hard to translate poetry ; in a translation you can get the meaning of the poem, but not all the beauty of its form, for the sound of the poetry cannot be translated.

One evening, on the bank of the river, as I breathed the perfume of the flowers, the wind brought me the sound of a distant flute. That I might answer it, I cut a willow branch and the song of my flute trilled out into the enchanted night.

Since that evening, every day at the hour when the country goes to sleep, the little birds hear two unknown birds calling to each other. They do not know who the singers are, but nevertheless, they understand the song.

We leave the blue mountain behind us and the moon follows after us. Our sleeves grow heavy with dew. We turn to see how far we have come, but the country is swallowed up in a white mist.

Here we are, hand in hand, at the stile of the little house where friends await us. Now we follow a path bordered with bamboos that brush against us as we pass.

We are all together. What happiness! They pour out perfumed wine for me. I sing the song of the wind and the pines. The nightingales, the frogs and the insects—they sing, too.

* * *

I have not turned my steps to the East Mountain for so long! I wonder how many times the roses have bloomed there?

The white clouds gather and scatter again, like friends. Who has a house there now to view the setting of the bright moon?

Here is a poem of war :

It is always in the early autumn that our enemies come down from the mountains to invade our country.

The call to arms has sounded! Our warriors soon will cross the Great Wall and they will not stop until they have reached the Desert of Gobi.

Out there they will see only the cold moon. Out there how they will shiver at the hour when the dew freezes on sword and armor!

Weep not, young women! You will weep too long!

The love of home is told in many poems, some long and some as short as these :

Our little servant is tying the feet of a chicken which he is going to carry to the market. The chicken flutters and cries.

My father looks at it without pity. My mother has turned away her head. A sparrow in the branches of the tree is frisking joyfully about, for now there will be more grain for him.

* * *

You come from my village? Tell me quickly all the things that have happened there since I left.

Your plum tree has blossomed, and a goat ate the little bamboo which you planted at the edge of the pool.

Among the poets of the Tang dynasty, the most famous is Li Po. The first three poems quoted in this chapter are his. He spent his youth with a hermit in a lonely place in the mountains, where he tamed the wild birds and learned to know the things that he loved best—trees, clouds and running water and the moon at night. Later, he came down into the world and passed his first examinations brilliantly. They say that at the final examination in the Imperial City, his paper was thrown out because two of the officials were jealous of him.

However his genius could not be hidden; his poems were taken to the Emperor, Ming Huang, who invited him to his court and feasted him at the Palace of the Golden Bells, in the Hall of the Seven Jewels. In the Emperor's gardens he wrote poems in praise of the beautiful Yang Kwei Fei. But neither emperors nor favorites impressed Li Po very much. He loved his poetry, his friends and his wine. One day he was asleep in a tavern, after drinking far too much wine, when a messenger came from the palace, bidding him come at once. "Tell the Emperor," said Li Po, "that I am talking with the gods;" and he went to sleep again.

Some say that he displeased the lovely Yang Kwei Fei ; others say that he was driven from the court by other men's jealousy ; at all events he left the capital and took up his wandering life again, sometimes with his friends who called themselves, "The Six Idlers of the Bamboo Grove," sometimes alone. Sometimes he sailed a hundred miles a day down some beautiful river, sometimes he stayed a year or two among the hills. It is said that he was drowned, finally, because he leaned too far out of his boat, trying to reach the reflection of the moon in the water. Wise men tell us that that story is not true, but perhaps Li Po himself would have liked it. His friends, who loved him very much, called him, "The God in Exile," because he seemed to have come from a higher world than this one and to look into realms that most men cannot see.

Here are two more of his poems.

Why do I live among the green mountains? I laugh and answer not, my soul is serene ; it dwells in another heaven and earth, belonging to no man.

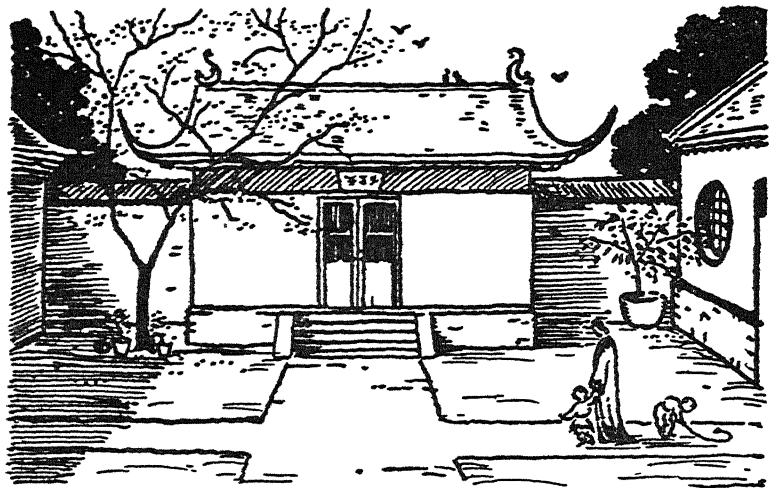
The peach trees are in flower, and the water flows on.

* * *

I put my whole soul into a song which I sang to men, and they laughed at it !

I took my lute ; I went and sat on the top of a mountain and I sang to the gods the song which men had not understood. The sun went down ; and the gods danced to the rhythm of my song on the red clouds which floated in the sky.





CHAPTER 12

THE SUNG DYNASTY [960-1280]

BEAUTIFUL painting was done during the Tang Dynasty and during the next dynasty, which is called the Sung. These two dynasties are so alike in many ways that they really form one long period, beginning splendidly with Tai Tsung in 618, and ending miserably, as you shall see, in 1280. Although there were many wars coming from without the Empire and also from within, these six hundred years were years of growth and beauty. The rich trade and the fame of China, which amazed the people of Europe in Marco Polo's time, were built up during these two dynasties. Literature and art, the invention of printing and the making of porcelain were some of the fruits of this long period.

Painting in China grew out of writing. One must draw beautifully in order to write the Chinese characters, and a fine writer was honored as much as any other artist. For that reason, you will notice in Chinese paintings the beauty of their lines and their brush strokes. Many poets were painters and

many painters were poets ; the two arts went hand in hand. Pictures were made with brush and ink, on silk and paper ; when they were colored, water colors were used. These paintings were made sometimes on long scrolls which could be unrolled and looked at part by part ; sometimes on pieces of silk or paper which were mounted on figured silks and could be hung on a wall.

They were not framed and hung as our pictures are, however, but were usually rolled up and kept in a safe place, like treasures, and when friends or families met together, a few pictures were taken out and enjoyed and then put away again, just as you might read a few poems, and then close the book again. Besides these smaller paintings, the walls of homes and temples and palaces were decorated with fine frescoes, and portraits were made to be hung in the Emperor's halls or in ancestral temples.

When a Chinese artist made a picture, he did not go out and copy the thing he wanted to paint, as so many Western artists do ; he studied it, very carefully, in every season and at every time of day. He tried to understand its spirit and its meaning and to paint these rather than the thing itself. "You must envy a fish its life in the water," said the master to his pupil, "you must know its desires. Otherwise it will look as if it were on a plate, instead of being alive." And there were never more strong, sinuous, slippery fish than those that leap up through the water of Chinese paintings. "Never paint even a stone without spirit," said the master, "if you do, it will seem dead. Your painting must always show these things : the movement of the spirit through everything, the true form and color of each thing that you paint, the relation of things to each other. If a great mountain is the most important part of your picture, that mountain must seem like a host and the

other hills and the trees like his guests ; or the mountain must be like a prince and the other parts of your picture his vassals. Look even at a flower ; the blossom is a lovely lady and the leaves are her servants. So there must be a relation between all the parts of your picture."

"Understand the character of what you paint. Look at the pine tree ; it is like a wise scholar, dignified and stern ; it is strong and constant and it lives a long time. The willow, on the other hand, is like a beautiful woman, all grace and gentleness. The bamboo combs the hair of the wind and sweeps the moon ; it is so bold that its shoots can break the hard ground as they push their way up ; it is so gentle that it sways before every breeze. It is like wisdom itself. Keep the character of these things in your mind as you paint them."

So, when the artist had studied his subject, he meditated about it, until he felt the movement of the spirit, the rhythm of the Tao, through all that he was going to paint, and understood the meaning of his subject. Then, in quietness, in his own room, he took up his brushes and made his picture from memory. Some artists spent their whole lives painting nothing but the bamboo, or the peony, or the plum blossom ; some studied horses, or fishes, and painted almost nothing else. It was said of one man that he gave you the very soul of the flower in his picture.

They were so eager to paint the life and the spirit of what they saw that they were sometimes afraid that their work might actually come to life. It was dangerous, they thought, to put the pupils in the eyes of the creatures they painted, for that seemed to make them live. A painter once drew a dragon on a temple wall and when it was finished he put the pupils in its eyes. That night there was a terrible thunderstorm and the rain poured down. In the morning the wall was empty ;

the dragon had flown off, raising the storm as he made his way back to the sky.

Another painter drew four dragons ; he was asked to finish the eyes and to put in the pupils, but he hesitated, for the creatures looked alive enough already. Finally, as the people for whom he had made the painting insisted, he agreed to put the pupils in the eyes of one of the dragons. That night, too, there was a great storm ; the one dragon twisted his great coils free from the wall, rose into the night and vanished ; the other three remained as they were painted.

An artist was sitting one day by the side of a pond, drawing fishes. He dropped a piece of his paper into the water, and when he pulled it out, the paper was blank, for the fish had swum off into the pond ! There are many stories like these ; you may believe them or not, as you like, but they will show you how earnestly the painter thought of his work, and how much other people thought of it too.

There had been painting long before the Tang Dynasty. When Confucius visited Loyang, in about 526 B.C., he saw a picture of the Duke of Chou holding his young nephew, Cheng, on his knees. There must have been many more wall decorations, and during the Han Dynasty portrait painting came into fashion. But none of these have remained. Buildings were still made of brick and wood ; they were easily burned, and in a Tartar raid, a rebellion or a change of dynasty, whole cities were destroyed. You remember how the splendid capital of Shi Huang Ti, into which he had brought the treasures of all the thirty-six provinces, burned for three months by order of a rebel general. The same sort of thing happened again and again.

During the Period of Darkness when the Tartars ruled the north, Buddhism gave new encouragement to painting and

to sculpture, for the Buddhist priests taught their religion through images and pictures just as they taught it through books. A straight, still figure of Buddha, his eyes half closed in meditation, his face quiet with inner concentration, helped the beginner to meditate. A picture of Heaven, or of a procession of saints moving with stately steps from cloud to cloud showed people the grace and beauty of holiness. India was filled with statues and paintings of its gods, and the pilgrims who went there and the teachers who came from there, brought Hindu art to China and brought new ideas to its painters. Many artists lived in the quiet monasteries and the walls of the temples were filled with decorations that showed the life of Buddha, and Kwan-yin and other saints, and the Western Paradise, which was another name for Heaven.

The most famous painter in China was Wu Tao-tze, who lived in the first part of the eighth century. That is long, long ago, before the time of Charlemagne or Alfred. He was a poor orphan who was born near Loyang, but while he was still a boy he showed such an amazing gift for drawing that the Emperor heard of him and called him to his court. He drew and painted all his life and marvelous stories are told about him. He was a Buddhist and worked a great deal in monasteries and churches. He once covered a big wall with such a life-like picture of hell that people's hair stood on end as they looked at it. They say that all the butchers and the fish-dealers in the town where it was painted gave up their trade and learned another kind of business, because Buddhism forbids people to kill any creature or to eat meat, and they were afraid that they might go to Wu's hell.

Another time he was drawing an assembly of saints, and all the townspeople—merchants and shopkeepers, children and old people—had come to watch him paint it, crowding about

until they stood like a wall around him. He had finished the figures and was putting the haloes about their heads. Buddhist haloes are wide circles of light that go all around the head ; sometimes they are just painted as a line of gold and sometimes they are filled in with designs like flames. Wu did not measure off these circles or use a line or compass, but quick as the wind he drew in the haloes, each with one sweep of his brush. The people gasped with amazement as he went from one end of the long wall to the other. "Surely the gods help him," they murmured to each other.

Once he was painting a procession of the gods on a palace wall. The work was done on silk and one day by accident a part of the silk was torn. A short time later, a grand old man, with a tattered hat pulled over his eyes, came limping to the palace gate and asked to have his foot healed. No one understood what he meant, but he asked to see the painting that had just been finished. When he was taken to it he touched with his cane the torn silk of the picture. "See," he said, "how you have hurt my foot." Sure enough, the tear was just where the foot of one of the gods was painted. When they turned to look at the old man, he had vanished, but they mended the silk reverently, and the god must have been healed, for he did not return.

They say that Wu Tao-tze went to one monastery where the monks received him rather rudely and wanted none of his art. Before he left he drew a donkey on one of the walls. The next morning the monks found all their furniture kicked to bits and on the wall the drawing of an innocent-looking donkey. They knew who had drawn it ; they begged Wu to come back and erase it, and after that they were more polite to him.

He painted landscapes as well as he did the human figures,

and he painted it as all Chinese did, from memory, after study and meditation. He was sent to make some drawings of the Yangtze River, by the Emperor Ming Huang, the same Ming Huang whose court was filled with art and music and poetry, the same Ming Huang who loved Yang Kwei Fei. Wu came back from the south with empty hands. "Where is your picture of the Great River?" he was asked. "I have it all in my heart," he answered, and when he was in his own home, he drew a hundred miles of the river in one day. He painted water so well that one could hear the sound of it all night long, so they say.

The walls on which he painted three hundred frescoes have crumbled or fallen, and his smaller paintings are lost, for even from the Tang Dynasty very few pictures have come down to us. In 845 the followers of Confucius, who did not believe in the religion of Buddha, persuaded the Emperor to close all Buddhist monasteries. The monasteries were not only closed, but forty-six hundred of them were destroyed and the monks and nuns sent back to family life. Buddhism recovered from this blow, and the monasteries were built again later, but in those that were destroyed many beautiful paintings and books and statues must have been lost, and among them Wu Tao-tze's frescoes. We are not sure that even one example of his art is in existence now. We know about him only from these stories and the records of history and the many copies that have been made of his work. In Japan his name is still a magic word, for Japan was a pupil of China at this time, and all its exquisite art was first learned from Chinese masters.

The story that is told about the end of Wu's life is worthy of the great artist that he was. The Emperor had asked him to decorate a hall of the palace with a landscape. Wu hid the

walls with curtains and worked at them for a long time. At last they were finished; the curtains were taken down and the Emperor was invited to see the work. He stood beside the artist, silent with admiration.

Before him lay a splendid scene; lofty mountains half hidden in mist, pine groves and distant hills, a swift waterfall that later became a broad river flowing past the homes of men, all drawn with surpassing skill and beauty. The artist broke the silence. "See, Your Majesty," he said, pointing to a place in the foreground of his picture, "in that cave there lives a spirit, and the inside of the cave is far more beautiful than the scene outside." He clapped his hands, and the cave seemed to open before his eyes. "Allow me to show Your Majesty the way," he said, and with that he stepped into the picture and to the Emperor's amazement disappeared into the cave. In another moment the whole scene had vanished, leaving nothing but a blank wall, and Wu Tao-tze was never seen again.

During the Sung Dynasty landscape painting was carried to its greatest perfection. We have many of the paintings that were made then and so we can judge of their beauty for ourselves. The Chinese had always loved nature, as you know, and had felt very close to it. Their old worship of mountains and rivers was expressed again in landscape painting, for their name for landscape is "Shan-shui," which means "mountain and water." There is never a painting without a mountain, or without water in some form, a cataract, a lake, a river, or a brook running among stones. They never felt that man was the most important being in the universe, for all things were made of Yang and Yin, and each had its place and its value in the divine order. So they painted an insect on a leaf as carefully as they painted an emperor on his throne. Buddhism

strengthened their love of nature, for did not Buddha say, "Truly trees and plants, rocks and stones, all shall enter Nirvana?"

A landscape painting ought to be so beautiful, they said, that those who look at it will want to live in it and will envy the people who are painted in the picture. And that is often true of the Chinese paintings; one does want to step into them and to live in the little low houses, nestled in groves of bamboo under the crags of lofty hills; to share the boat of the lonely fisherman, moored under the sweeping boughs of a willow by a river bank; to travel deep in a valley on the back of a patient donkey, across a little bridge, and up and on into the cloudy hills; to see the high peaks of the mountains rising out of the morning mists and to hear the sound of the swift waterfall among the pines. These paintings are a lovely part of the treasure that China has to show to us.



THE TANG DYNASTY, begun so powerfully by Tai Tsung, ended very weakly, like most dynasties, in 907. It never got over the rebellion in the reign of Ming Huang, but went from bad to worse. There were certain evil things that always happened when a dynasty grew weak, certain dangers into which the country fell unless it was wisely and strongly ruled. One of these was division; the Empire was so large that unless there was a strong central government it fell into pieces and some provinces rebelled and tried to become independent, just as the feudal princes had done during the Chou dynasty.

The feudal princes had been replaced by governors and viceroys, but the governors of border provinces had to have large armies to defend their territories, and it was not hard for them, if the Emperor was weak, to set themselves up as independent chiefs, which they often did.

Another danger, that we can never forget, was the Tartars, who were still growing in numbers and in power and who could only be held back by a strong army and a united China.

A third danger was nearer home ; in fact, it was in the very home of the Emperor. As you know, the Emperor had, besides his wife who was the Empress, many lesser wives, or concubines. Each of these ladies had her own apartments, her children and sometimes other relatives, and her many attendants. This made the imperial palace an immense place. It was usually in the northern part of the capital, since it must face south, and it had a high wall around it. Inside the wall were all the buildings needed for government : halls of audience, great halls for entertainment, council-chambers, rooms for all the business of government and for the ministers and their many secretaries ; libraries, treasure-houses, arsenals, store-rooms, immense kitchens, and quarters for innumerable servants. Besides these there were the ancestral temple, the Emperor's own spacious apartments and those of the Empress and the imperial concubines. Since the buildings were all one story high and built around courtyards and gardens, the walls of a palace often measured several miles around.

There were certain officers or attendants who were called eunuchs, who had charge of all that part of the palace where the Emperor and his wives lived. They served the many ladies of the household and managed its complicated affairs. Since they had nothing of any great importance to do, they spent a great deal of their time and energy in plotting and planning

to get power and wealth for themselves. They knew all the palace secrets, and they played on the feelings and the ambitions of the many people in the imperial family, in order to carry out their plans.

Since the Emperor had many wives he usually had many sons. It was not the custom in China, as it was in Europe, for a ruler to leave his throne to his eldest son. He chose the son whom he thought best fitted to reign after him, and this might be the eldest son or any other. That led to jealousy and quarreling, as you can imagine, and gave plenty of chance for any amount of plotting and evil designs. Several of the Emperor's sons might want to succeed him, and each wife wanted her son to be his father's heir. The eunuchs would often choose a weak prince, and then, in every underhand way possible, persuade his father to make him the crown prince. Sometimes they got rid of the other sons by having them sent to distant provinces, sometimes even by murder. Then, when the prince whom they had chosen became emperor, they had him in their power, for they had practically put him on the throne. He did what they told him to do, appointed ministers and generals whom they picked out, and rewarded them richly for all their evil doings. They were his private counsellors and practically ruled the Empire. And when the Empire was ruled in such a narrow and selfish way, you can imagine what became of it. For beside the eunuchs, there were also ministers and other officials who often cared more for their own advancement than for their country.

No official in China was paid enough by the government to support himself and his household. So he had to make money out of everything that he did. For instance, one of the duties of a high official was to choose men to work under him. The men whom he chose paid him something for the positions

which he gave them. If he collected taxes, he had to give a certain amount to the government, but anything more than that he could keep for himself. If a case of law was brought before him for judgment, the people who were concerned in it paid him for his decision. There were many other ways in which he could make money.

Now if the officials were honest men, there was no great harm in this, for it was the custom, and people paid a certain amount to their governors or judges just as we pay our doctors and our lawyers. But if they were not honest men, they could do great harm and get money in very unjust ways. A governor could tax the people much too heavily, for instance, and keep most of the money himself; he could judge a case in favor of the person who paid him most money, and give government positions to those who paid him instead of to those who passed the highest examinations. So this custom was a dangerous one, and when the Emperor let the eunuchs rule, and gave himself up to the pleasures of the palace, there was injustice all through the country.

When people in responsible positions do this sort of thing, and evil men get the upper hand in government, we call it corruption. So we can call the dangers that I have spoken of by three long names—rebellion, invasion and corruption.

When the Tang Dynasty fell, two of these evils beset the Empire. The later Tang Emperors were in the hands of the eunuchs and the usual result followed. The provinces rebelled, and after the last Tang ruler had been murdered, the Empire was divided for over fifty years, while one rebel chief after another tried in vain to hold the capital and to establish a lasting dynasty. Finally in 960 a man was made Emperor who was able to bring the country together. This was Chao Kwang-yin, who founded the Sung Dynasty, which ruled over

the whole of China for nearly two hundred rich and fruitful years. It was during that time that much of the landscape painting and many other lovely things were done. Then the dynasty grew weak, and in 1125 the last great danger came—Tartar invasion.

One tribe of Tartars after another had held the wide grasslands of the north and had traveled westward into Central Asia or pushed southward into China. First there had been the Huns, who were most powerful under Mow-tan in the Han Dynasty; then during the Period of Darkness, The Sien-pi and the Toba Tartars reigned over northern China; after them came the Turks, who were far more powerful than any who came before them. Tai Tsung had kept them out of China, but they had moved westward and made a great empire for themselves. By the eleventh century they had taken the place of the Arabs in western Asia, and held Persia, Syria, Asia Minor and all the land between these countries and the Pamir Highlands. Their descendants are the people of modern Turkey.

Meanwhile in the east other tribes had risen and prospered. We have compared them to clouds that rose and gathered and drifted westward and southward. There seemed to be no end to the hordes of horsemen who were raised on the bleak lands north of the Middle Kingdom. The latest nation to gain power were the Cathayans, or Khitans, who lived northeast of China. By the end of the Tang Dynasty they held all the northern country that we now call Manchuria and Mongolia, and both Korea and Tibet were their vassals. They called themselves the Iron Tartars. Soon, of course, they came over the northern borders of China. The Great Wall was no longer any use against the organized armies of these days and during the troubled times after the fall of the Tang Dynasty, they seized a great part of the territory north of the Huang-ho.

The Tartars loved war ; each new nation came forth eager for conquest, for they were doing it for the first time and it was very exciting to conquer a rich land, to kill and plunder and to possess beautiful things. To the Chinese, however, these wars were an old, old story. It was very hard to have to defend their country century after century against the attacks of these young, barbarous peoples. They came like river-floods, an unceasing danger. And now the Chinese, who did not love war, were deeply interested in all the things of peace ; in art and scholarship and exquisite living. They were no match for barbarians.

At first they paid the Cathayans to keep away. They paid 100,000 ounces of silver and 200,000 pieces of silk every year. It was called a gift and the Emperor of China was called the "Elder Brother" and the chief of the Cathayans was the "Younger Brother." There was another strong race of Tartars living in the northwest, who also pressed into China. With them, too, the Emperor made a treaty, paying them 250,000 ounces of silver, 250,000 pieces of silk and 250,000 catties (that is, over 300,000 pounds) of tea every year. This, too, was known as a "present" and the Emperor was called the "Father" of the Tartar chief, but no word could hide the fact that these payments were made by a weak nation to two stronger ones. The Middle Kingdom was paying tribute to two Tartar hordes.

The Cathayans began to take more territory from China and in 1125 the Emperor, in despair, did a very foolish thing. Many other countries have made the same mistake and have always been sorry for it. He invited one tribe of barbarians to drive another tribe out. In the eastern part of Manchuria there lived still a third horde called the Kins, who were enemies of the Cathayans. They called themselves the Golden Tartars, for they said, "Iron rusts, but gold lasts forever." The Sung

Emperor made an alliance with the Kins. He said, "Let us both fight against the Cathayans. You will have the satisfaction of defeating your enemies and taking all their land. I will get back my lost territories and will reward you richly for your help." The Kins agreed gladly, and with very little help from China, defeated the Cathayans and drove them out of their whole territory.

But of course they did not keep their agreement with China. They not only did not give back the lost territories, but they made war on the Chinese, and drove them south of the Huang-ho and made them pay millions of ounces of silver, and pieces of silk and pounds of tea. The Emperor was a coward; he had splendid generals, who resisted the Kins to their utmost and could perhaps have defeated them; but he listened instead to a traitor, called his generals back and had the best of them murdered. The Kins swept on; they took the capital, and captured the Emperor, whose son fled to safety south of the Yangtze. The Emperor died a captive in Manchuria. He had been a great lover of art and had a beautiful collection of paintings and other lovely things; these were all destroyed by the Kins, who made their empire in northern China.

Meanwhile his son had been proclaimed Emperor in the south, and made his capital at Hangchow, which was a flourishing sea-port. The boundary between the two empires was about halfway between the Huang-ho and the Yangtze, and the Sung Emperor had the protecting stream of the great river between him and the Kins. The same thing that had happened during the Period of Darkness happened now, for "China is a great sea that salts all the water that flows into it." The Kins took up all the Chinese ways, the religion, the government, and the love of learning and of art. There were five

Tartar painters who became well-known for their work. So for a hundred years the two empires lived side by side, one in the north and one in the south, until in the early thirteenth century they were threatened by an enemy that was stronger than either one of them.

There was one other thing that happened during this long period that must be recorded. As far as we know, the custom of binding women's feet, to make them smaller, began at this time. Perhaps it was because the court was so elegant and luxurious that women foolishly wanted to make their feet more dainty and tiny; perhaps it was because the country had grown so splendidly that people were afraid that the women might want to leave the courtyards of the home and take their place beside the men in education and art and government. No one seems to know just how and when the custom started, but from the time of the Tang or Sung Dynasty up to the present time, the women of China have bound their feet.

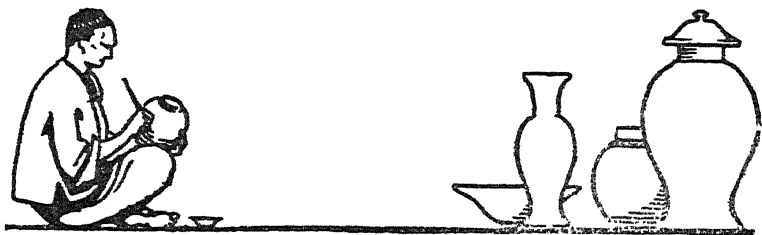
When a little girl was six or eight years old the binding began. Her pretty little foot was bandaged with strips of white cloth in such a way that the four small toes of each foot were bent in under the sole and the whole foot was narrowed. She had to walk, of course, on the joints of these bent toes, and you can imagine how much it hurt. Then the foot was also shortened, by wrapping it in tight bandages that drew the ball of the foot nearly back to the heel, bending the arch of the foot up like a bent bow.

All this was done while the child's foot was growing. Nothing hurts more than to stop a growing thing; the bones were getting larger and pushing forward to reach their normal size, and the bandages not only stopped this growth but were pulled tighter and tighter each day until the foot grew smaller instead of larger. If it had been the hands that were bound, it would

have hurt less, but the feet must carry the whole weight of the body and the little girls must walk a certain amount each day or their feet would become diseased and perhaps drop off.

So, while they were still children, and should have been running happily about in play, the little girls in every household were pale and sad, crying all day and often all night, because they could not sleep for the pain of their feet. "For every pair of bound feet there is a big tub full of tears," it is said. It took three or four years to finish the work, and then the growth stopped and the worst pain was over.

The result was a pair of crippled feet, small and pointed, anywhere from three to six inches long. It was not just the ladies who bound their feet; the custom, which probably began at court, spread over nearly the whole of China, and farmers' wives and working women, who must be on their feet all day long, did it too. The tiny feet, which were called "golden lilies," were considered very pretty, and parents were afraid that no man would marry their daughters if their feet were of normal size. Fashions are strange: women all over the world have done very foolish things to make themselves more beautiful, but customs last longer in China than anywhere else, and it is sad to think that for a thousand years millions of little girls have begun their lives with years of terrible pain, and that millions of women have gone through life with such a handicap.



IN SPITE of these evils, in spite of rebellion, and weak or wicked rule, and in spite of war and conquest, certain very important things went on steadily as if nothing dangerous were happening. For a nation is like a person : it has gifts and purposes, things that it can do well and things that it wants to do, and it develops its gifts and carries out its purposes as long as it lives. Wars and changes of government are like illnesses or accidents ; sometimes a nation dies of them, but if it lives, it goes on and does what it wants to do in spite of them. And these gifts and purposes are the most important part of any nation's life, far more important than kings or dynasties or wars.

During the fifty troubled years between the Tang and the Sung Dynasty, during the wars with the Cathayans and even during the conquest of the Kins, the real life of China had not been deeply touched. The landscape painting that I have told you about developed at that time and there were innumerable painters and poets, musicians and philosophers. For art was never a profession in China. Every cultivated person wrote well, painted, or played an instrument. Busy officials and emperors found time to draw very beautifully and to write excellent verses. The great artists were just those who were most highly gifted and who therefore gave their whole lives to their art.

Other very important things were done at this time, one of which was the invention of printing and another the making of porcelain. Printing was invented and widely used in China and in all of eastern Asia five or six hundred years before it was known in Europe. Two or three things may have led to the invention. For a long time seals had been used on state papers by all officials, and printed, first in clay and then

in red ink. Priests, too, used to give people little paper charms, stamped with a picture of Buddha or some Taoist saint, to protect them from demons or illness. Thousands of these were made and distributed and were a sort of printing.

It did not take the clever eyes and hands of the Black-haired People very long to improve on these first methods. They loved books, and literature was the very foundation of their civilization. As the Empire grew larger and as other countries came to learn from them, the followers of the three religions wanted a quicker way to copy and to spread their teachings. Experiments were made in the peace and leisure of Buddhist monasteries and the first book was printed in 868. It was one of the sacred books of Buddhism, called the *Diamond Sutra*. A copy of it has been found recently, walled up in a temple in Turkestan. It is the oldest printed book in the world.

All the tools that the printer needed were at hand. Paper had been invented during the Han Dynasty, and had been improved very quickly, so that in the first centuries A.D. fine paper was in common use. Excellent ink made from lamp-black had been used ever since the fifth century. All that was needed beside these was a smooth block of wood as large as two pages of a book, on which the raised characters were carved. Then the characters were brushed over with ink and a sheet of paper was placed upon them, brushed down lightly and firmly with a clean brush and then lifted off. This is called block printing; it was used in Europe before movable type was invented. Movable type, that is, each letter or character cut separately, so that it can be used in many different ways, was invented by the Chinese during the Sung Dynasty, but they always preferred the block printing. Since they had no alphabet they did not need movable type as much as the

Europeans did, and they did not need printing presses, but did all the work by hand.

Printing spread very quickly into Japan, Korea, Tibet and Turkestan. During the Sung Dynasty, all the important literature of China was beautifully printed. Paper money was printed as well as books, to the great amazement of travelers who came to China and who thought that magic must be used to make a man take worthless pieces of paper in exchange for valuable goods. Playing cards were another offshoot of the new industry. All these things gradually found their way into Europe and were used there much later. From China they spread through Turkestan and to Turkestan came the Arab caravans. Since the Arabian Empire had once stretched from Persia to Spain, the Arabs were scattered through all that country. They were eager for knowledge and passed anything that they knew from country to country and through them Europe learned many things. Paper was made in southern Europe in the twelfth century and printing was invented in Germany in the fifteenth century.

The making of porcelain was a great addition to China's busy trade with other countries, and gave great pleasure to the Chinese themselves. Do you ever wonder why we call the dishes and cups that we use for our food, china? It is because they are made of porcelain, and porcelain was first made in China and then sent to other countries where it was called "China-ware." Finally other countries learned to make it, too, but still it was called "china," partly because it first came from there and partly because no other country has learned to make quite such beautiful porcelain as that of the Middle Kingdom.

All the races of men, when they first began to be civilized, have taken clay and made pots of it, and baked them in the

sun or in the fire until they were hard enough to hold water and to cook with. The Chinese had made pottery before the days of Shun, who was a potter himself, but at about the time of the Tang Dynasty they found out how to make the finer and more beautiful ware that we call porcelain. This can only be made of a certain fine white clay, mixed with powdered rock and sand. All these are ground very fine and washed and purified two or three times until they can be made into a smooth white paste.

With this the potter makes any lovely shape that he chooses, a bowl or a vase or a jar ; then he glazes it and fires it. Porcelain can stand a much hotter fire than ordinary pottery ; it must be baked in fierce heat for several days, and then allowed to cool for two or three days before it is taken out of the oven. The fire must be watched and kept at an even heat day and night, lest it burn too high or too low and injure the tender paste. When it is finished, porcelain is different from pottery in several ways : it is white all through, whereas the clay of pottery is always brown or reddish ; you can see the light through it and it rings with a musical sound when it is tapped with something hard. It is much harder than pottery and so can be made into thinner and more delicate shapes, and it takes a far more beautiful glaze.

The Chinese loved this new material and made very beautiful things with it. It reminded them of jade, because it was so hard and smooth, and they made glazes for it that looked like the color of jade : deep green, sea-green or green as bright as sunlit grass. They also made yellow, red and deep purple glazes. Before the clay was fired they made patterns in it, either pressed into the soft clay or raised on it ; flower patterns, or designs, or delicate tracings of dragons and fishes. Then they put the glaze over these and the pattern showed

through the color. They did not mix their colors much at this time, but each piece of porcelain was glazed with one color and it was very simple and lovely. The favorite color was green in all its shades, from the palest bluish green like a bird's egg to a deep spinach-green. Porcelain of this sort is called celadon and is highly prized now.

Sometimes strange things happened in the ovens. The porcelain would come out different from what they had expected, so that the makers thought that the fires themselves had been working at it. Designs that they had not put there would appear on the glaze, as if the fingers of the flame had drawn them. These were looked at with amazement by the workmen who took the dishes from the ovens, and they often learned in this way to make a new color or a new kind of glaze.

They say that a man once bought a basin in which to wash his hands. It was in the winter and the water that was left in the basin after he had washed, froze. But behold! It froze into the most lovely picture of a spray of peach blossoms! He gazed at it in amazement and delight. Another time the same thing happened, but this time the water froze in the form of a full-blown peony. After that, when he wanted to show something very lovely to his friends, he took out the basin, and let some water freeze in it, and then they watched the pictures that were made in the thin ice—a bamboo grove, a village, a mountain, always a different scene.

A man once gave a banquet, and at the end of it the sound of flutes and of organs seemed to come from the air around him and his guests. There were no musicians, and everyone wondered where the music could come from, until it was finally discovered that some porcelain bowls were sending out the sounds, perhaps because they had been set ringing by the gay voices of the men around the table.

Poems were written about porcelain. "It is like bright moons, cunningly carved, and dyed with spring water." "It is like curling disks of the thinnest ice, filled with green clouds." "It is like tender lotus leaves, full of dewdrops, floating on the river." An emperor ordered some porcelain for his palace. "The color," he said, "must be just like the blue of the sky after rain, when the clouds have broken."

The Arab and Persian merchants who came to China were delighted by it. "They have in China a very fine clay," they said when they reached home, "with which they make vases that are as transparent as glass. You can see water through it." They began to buy it and trade it all through the southern seas, and the Chinese too, took it in their junks and sold it in India and Arabia and in the southern islands, Java and Sumatra and Borneo. The people of Borneo lived very simply at that time, but they loved the sea-green porcelain of China and kept the bowls as ornaments in their houses. They thought it so beautiful that they handed it down as a great treasure to their descendants and told them that it was made of the same clay from which God had made the sun and the moon. The Japanese loved and treasured it also.

And so again China had a precious thing that no one else knew how to make. Just as its caravans had carried silk to western Asia and to Rome during the Han Dynasty, now its ships carried porcelain into the western and southern seas and vessels from other lands crowded the ports of China to buy delicate dishes for their kings and for anyone who could afford to pay the high prices that the merchants asked for their ware.

The sea-ports, Canton, Hangchow, Fuchow grew large and rich, for the sea-trade was increasing all the time. Ships were sometimes lost in hurricanes or plundered by pirates, but the gain was far greater than the loss ; merchants and shipmasters

gained great wealth and built splendid houses and pleasure-gardens around the lakes that lie along the lower course of the Yangtze. There were no Tartars in the southern seas and the Sung Dynasty felt secure, surrounded as it was by rivers and mountains and ocean. It ruled over a rich and fruitful land, large enough to satisfy anyone. Although many Chinese were shamed and saddened to think that half their country was in Tartar hands, others forgot this and were content with their comfortable and busy life. None of them could foresee the disaster that was soon to fall upon them; no one dreamed that there was an enemy strong enough to cross land and river and take even these southern provinces from the hands of their rightful rulers.





CHAPTER 13

THE MONGOLS [1280-1368]

NORTH of the Gobi Desert, across the wide grasslands that stretched from one horizon to the other, a boy of thirteen was riding beside his father. As they looked out over the rolling plains, they could see nothing human, no city and no road ; only distant wooded hills, and the far horizons, and above them in the sky, a few hawks soaring slowly. The boy rode proudly, for his father was a chief, the Khan of several hordes of Tartars who called themselves the Mongols. They lived between the Onon and the Kerulon Rivers, in the north-eastern part of the big country that has been named after them, Mongolia.

The Mongols were a fierce, hardy people, who boasted that they were descended from a blue wolf, and who whiled away the dark winter evenings with long tales about the heroes who had been their first leaders. They lived as all Tartars did, in round felt tents that were called yurts, moving here:

and there to pasture their flocks of horses and cattle and sheep.

After the father and son had ridden for a day or two, they met a horseman whom they knew, and stopped to speak to him. "Where are you going, O Yessugai?"* asked the horseman. "I am going with my son Temujin, to his mother's kinsfolk to find a bride for him," answered the father. The other horseman looked searchingly at the boy, who returned his gaze frankly. "Your son has a clear face and bright eyes," said he. "Last night I had a strange dream. I dreamed that a white falcon, holding the sun and the moon in its talons, flew down and perched on my wrist. That is surely an omen of greatness, I thought, a sign of high fortune. Now you have come with your son, O Yessugai, and have shown me the meaning of my dream. I have a daughter at home who is still young, but come and look at her. Perhaps she will be a bride for your boy." He led them to his yurt, and there they found a beautiful little girl, only ten years old, named Bortai. Yessugai was much pleased with her, and arranged a marriage between the two children, to take place when they were old enough.

Then he left Temujin to get acquainted with his future wife and rode home alone. The boy probably showed the little girl how well he could ride and shoot, and told her how many thousands of men were under his father's command, while she looked at him with wide eyes. Perhaps they rode together and swam in the rivers and drove the flocks, for Tartar women were nearly as hardy as the men and they did most of the work about the camp. Both boys and girls dressed in trousers and leather boots, long coats

* Remember that "ai" is pronounced like y in cry.

bound at the waist with a girdle, and felt hats tied under the chin because of the winds.

He had not spent many days with Bortai and her family before a man came galloping up to the yurt on a tired horse. He spoke to Bortai's father, "Yessugai wants to see Temujin and has sent me for him." Temujin went with him immediately and as they galloped back the man said to him, "On the way home, your father stopped and feasted with some men whom he met, and they poisoned him. He wants to see you before he dies." They rode, as Tartars often did, without stopping for food or rest, but Yessugai died before his son reached him. So Temujin became the Khan of his father's hordes and the flag, hung with nine white yak tails, hung above his mother's yurt.

But Tartars had no loyalty; each man cared only for himself and followed the leader who was strongest. Yessugai's men did not want to obey a boy of thirteen; and when the time came to move northward in the spring, they left him and went with another leader, his father's enemy. "The strongest stone is sometimes broken," they said to him, "the deepest well is sometimes dry. Why should we stay with you?" His mother, who was a strong woman, seized the standard with nine yak tails and rode after them, shouting to them to return. Some did turn back, but the rest rode heartlessly on, abandoning her and Temujin and his younger brothers and sister. Temujin went into the yurt and wept with rage and sorrow. What did the dream of the white falcon mean? High fortune? He seemed a very unfortunate and unimportant boy just now.

He grew up in constant danger. The leaders of his hordes, knowing that he was their rightful Khan, watched him jealously. Seeing him grow strong and bold and resolute, they

rode down upon his yurt to kill him. He escaped on a swift horse, and his mother and brothers scattered and hid. He fled to a wooded mountain and hid three days surrounded by his enemies. Driven out by hunger, he was caught, and his head and hands were fastened in a sort of square yoke that rested on his shoulders. In spite of this obstacle, he killed his guard, and escaped, found his family and his followers and set up his standard again.

Danger and hatred seemed to strengthen him and he resolved to regain what was rightfully his, and more besides. He managed to keep his straggling followers together and to protect them and their herds. Nothing was hidden on those broad prairies; strength and cunning were the only things that were valued. Other men saw what he was doing and respected him; more and more families set up their yurts under his banner. When he felt sure of himself, he went to claim his little wife, Bortai. Her father believed in him and welcomed him, and Bortai, in a coat of white camel's hair, with silver coins hanging in the dark braids of her hair, rode back with Temujin to his yurt. They were both still in their teens.

He still had to fight his way. He allied himself with other tribes and other chiefs, helped them at times and claimed their help when he needed it. When he was strong enough, he made war on the men who had chased and captured him. He defeated them, although he had only half as many men as they had, and after the battle he had the leaders boiled alive in seventy big caldrons. After this, he was recognized as chief of the Mongols, but that was not enough. He had a new ambition. One after another he made war on all the Tartar tribes north of the desert and conquered them. Sometimes he was defeated, sometimes wounded and left for dead,

but he was never disheartened and he never gave up. "The glory of a deed," said Temujin, "is in finishing it to the very end." He never let an enemy escape and he never forgot a friend.

He had a way of winning men's devotion. They saw great power in him, just as Bortai's father had, and they left anything that they were doing and followed him and were willing to give their lives for him. They thought that he was something more than human, a man favored by the gods. And truly, this Temujin, who is better known by his title of Jenghis Khan, was one of the most extraordinary men the world has ever seen. He was the greatest Tartar that ever lived.

For just as one might say of the Duke of Chou, or of Tai Tsung, "This is a Chinese—this is the man whom China, with its farmlands and its rivers, its wisdom and its industry, can produce ;" so one can say of Temujin, "This is the Tartar—this is the man whom Central Asia, with its bitter winds, its restless hordes, its deserts and its endless plains can produce." He was like Mow-tan and other such leaders, only greater than they ; more bold and strong, more greedy and more generous, more cruel and more pitiless than any.

In 1206, when he was 44 years old, he called an assembly of all the northern tribes, to be held near his old home on the Onon River. There he was proclaimed Grand Khan over them all and given the added title of "Jenghis," which means "Very Mighty." And there in the Assembly he praised and rewarded the men who had helped him when he had been a hunted boy and who stood by him as he fought his way to power. He made them his generals and trusted them as he did himself, and they never failed him.

The other nations of Asia did not know what trouble was brewing for them north of the desert. In northern China the Kins had been ruling for nearly a century and had forgotten their Tartar ways. Their empire included Manchuria and eastern Mongolia and reached southward, below the Huang-ho, to the boundary of the Sung Empire. The Great Wall lay like an ornament across their lands. Their capital was the city of Yenking, which later became the famous city of Peking ; they were the first to use it as an imperial capital. This northern part of China had been called Cathay ever since the Cathayans had ruled over it, and it kept the name, even though it now belonged to the Kins.

Westwards, in Turkestan and beyond, the Cathayans had conquered a wide domain for themselves, after they had been driven out of China by the Kins. It covered the old caravan routes and was known as Black Cathay. Still farther west were the vast dominions of the Turks who, you remember, had conquered the Arab Empire. They had become Moham-medans and had taken up the fine civilization of the Arabs and the Persians, just as the eastern Tartars took up the civilization of China. The Turks encouraged art and trade and learning just as the Arabs had done, and they lived as magnificently as the Caliphs had. They had also overrun Northern India, which was protected on the north and east by its impassable mountains, but was open to conquest on the west.

All these different parts of Asia were living fairly peacefully in the early thirteenth century. And the Sung Dynasty of China, in the valley of the Yangtze and the southern provinces, made delicate porcelains, printed its great literature on fine paper, and sent its ships over the high seas.

AFTER JENGHIS KHAN had been proclaimed ruler of all the Tartars north of the desert, he looked forth for other lands to conquer. He was in the prime of his life and had under his command many thousands of restless, quarrelsome, hardy horsemen. He had trusty generals who had ridden with him through thick and thin, and he had four grown sons whose names are like a battle-cry—Juchi, Jagatai, Ogotai and Tuli. These four were the sons of Bortai, for although Jenghis had many wives and some of them were royal princesses, Bortai was his trusted companion all through his life and in the days of his glory sat in the seat of honor at his left. These sons of hers were his only heirs and were nearly as strong as their father. What was to be done with all this power? The Mongols did not know how to build up a nation or how to become civilized; they only knew how to fight and to conquer what other people had.

They had a grudge against the Kins, who had put some of their chiefs to a frightful death and this made a good excuse for war. Jenghis, in his own way, was very religious; before starting on his first great conquest, he climbed a mountain, and prayed alone to Heaven. "Boundless Heaven," he said, "I am going to avenge the blood of my kinsfolk whom the Golden Khans have killed. If you favor me, send me help from on high, and on earth send men to help me; send also good and evil spirits." Then he started on the long march southward, past the broad desert to the Great Wall.

Never before had such a Tartar army flowed down from the north, for these Tartars were not only united and organized, but they were strictly disciplined. Jenghis had made laws for them and the death of a man was a small thing to Jenghis Khan. He was perfectly obeyed. The army was simply and cleverly organized in bands of ten, a hundred, a

thousand and ten thousand men. His sons and his generals commanded the bands of ten thousand, and other officers led the smaller bands. Each leader was responsible for himself and for ten others ; each man belonged to a group of ten and was not allowed to leave his group, or to leave a wounded comrade behind. Jenghis knew the danger of selfishness and disloyalty, which were two Tartar weaknesses ; he also commanded that no man should plunder until the order had been given. These were hard rules for a Tartar to obey, but they were not broken.

The Mongol army could march more quickly and more freely than any other army in the world, because its food was so easily supplied. Each soldier had three or four horses, and great herds of extra horses and cattle were driven along with the army. They milked the cows and mares and ate the cattle as they needed them. They made the milk into a hard sort of cheese and dried the meat in strips. A Mongol could go for days with a small bag full of this dried milk and a little meat. If their herds were killed off and milk was lacking, they sometimes opened the veins of their horses, drank the blood, and closed the veins again. The horses were as hardy as the men, and needed no food but what they found on the way, grazing in the summer, and in the winter pawing the snow away with their hoofs and eating the dried grass that they found under it. No heat and no cold, no mountain passes and no deserts frightened or stopped these horses or their riders. They moved as swiftly and steadily as a swarm of locusts. Who could stand against such an army as this ?

We cannot follow in detail the conquests of Jenghis. He entered Cathay and marched across it, killing and destroying and plundering as he went. What an amazement it was to the horsemen, some of whom had never been south of the

desert, to see cities and walls, bridges and boats! At first they did not know how to attack a city whose walls were too high for a horse to leap, but they came back, year after year, until they learned. Ninety rich cities were taken north of the Huang-ho, Yenking holding out to the last. When the Mongols took a city they plundered it of everything rich and valuable that was in it. Then they drove the inhabitants out of the gates and rounded them up like cattle in some convenient place outside the walls. There they divided them: they took captive anyone who could be useful to them, that is, all the skilled workmen and the young and strong who could be their slaves; the rest, men, women and children, they killed without mercy and left their bodies heaped upon the ground. Then they burned the city, and went on their way, driving their prisoners before them and leaving behind them silent, smoking ruins.

Jenghis was called away from northern China by trouble in his western territories, which were threatened by the ruler of Black Cathay. He left one of his best generals to finish the conquest of the Kins, while he turned, with the rest of his hordes, to the west. He conquered Black Cathay; its chief was hunted up through the wilds of the Pamir highlands and his head was brought to Jenghis. So the Mongol Khan found himself master of all the northern country between the Pamirs and the Yellow Sea.

Wagon loads of booty had traveled year after year from the conquered lands into Mongolia. The treasure could not be measured: gold and silver, silk and jade, jewelry and weapons and clothing. With them came captives who could teach the Mongols many things: how to use catapults against city walls, how to throw pots full of fire and explosives among the houses, and how to build boats. A tribe of Turks who had

joined the Mongols of their free will, knew how to read and write. Jenghis used their knowledge, had his messages and his commands written, and sent his grandsons to them to be taught. He learned from all his captives about the rest of Asia, and now that he held a great empire, he encouraged trade with other countries and sent out caravans to visit the western lands.

West of Black Cathay, as you know, was the great empire of the Turks, divided into several states. The nearest was Kwaresm, a wealthy land with proud and prosperous cities, Bokhara and Samarcand, Herat and Nishapur. Jenghis sent friendly envoys to the Shah, as the Turkish ruler was called, carrying gifts of jade and silver and robes of camel's hair. But an unfortunate thing happened. A caravan of Mongol merchants was traveling through Kwaresm. The governor of one of the cities stopped them, accused them of being spies and put them to death. The news of this deed shocked Jenghis, and of course he did not leave it unavenged. Again he climbed a mountain and lay on its top for three days and nights, seeking guidance from Heaven. Then he came down, called his hosts together and started westward. "You have chosen war," he wrote to the Shah; "what is to be, will be, and only God knows what will happen."

The army was more seasoned, more experienced and more deadly than it had been when it entered northern China. It carried engineers with it, and terrible instruments of war. The big cities of Kwaresm were filled with busy workshops and wide markets, with white-walled houses and rose-gardens, while orchards and fertile fields stretched beyond their walls. They were well guarded and heroically defended, but one by one they fell before the catapults, the fire, and the swarming attacks of the Mongols. The Tartars, taught by Jenghis, never

gave up and never stopped ; day and night their attack went on, fresh fighters taking the place of those who were exhausted or killed. And when the city was taken, they plundered, slaughtered, burned and went on, leaving a great track of destruction across western Asia. In one place they found that some people saved their lives by lying down among the dead ; so after that it was ordered that the heads of all those that were slain should be cut off (to make quite sure that they were dead), and pyramids were built of these heads, one of men's, one of women's, and one of children's heads. "You have sinned greatly," said Jenghis to the citizens of Bokhara, "and I have been sent by God to punish you. I am the scourge of God."

He sent his four sons and three of his great generals, each at the head of ten thousand men, farther west. His sons overran the rest of Kwaresm, and his generals laid waste the country around the Caspian Sea, met and defeated the troops of Russia, and opened the way for further conquest. A few of the Turks, fleeing before them, escaped into the mountains of Asia Minor ; it was they who founded the Turkish Empire, of which we shall hear more later.

After these immense victories Jenghis Khan went back to the east, moving slowly, with an enormous train of wagons laden with treasure. He wanted to see how the war in Cathay was getting on. He was sixty-five years old and perhaps he was a little tired of killing. There is no way of counting the millions of people who were slain by his orders, but it is said that in eastern Asia alone eighteen millions were killed and in that case many more must have met the same fate in the west.

Shortly after his return, he himself died and his body, laid on a huge wagon, was carried back hundreds of miles to his

birthland and was buried under a great tree that he had admired. Sadly and slowly his soldiers followed him, remembering the amazing adventures and the power of this man who had once been a helpless boy, cast out from his horde and hunted by his kinsfolk. "Have you left us, have you left your wife and your children, O my Khan?" they chanted, as they rode beside his funeral wagon. "Once you led us, sweeping forward in pride like an eagle, O my Khan, but now you have stumbled and fallen like an unbroken colt. Have you left us, have you left the Assembly of your people, O my Khan?"

Now the sons of a great man are rarely as great as he, and it has often been the case that the sons are particularly weak and worthless men, as if the father had used all of his strength for his own deeds and had nothing to leave to his children. This was not true of Jenghis, however. The four sons of Bortai were great conquerors, and they and their sons carried still further the conquests of their father.

Ogotai was the next Grand Khan and under him Persia, Irak and Syria were conquered and a Mongol Dynasty was started there which lasted a hundred years. The son of Juchi set up an empire in southern Russia, with its capital on the Volga. It was known as the Golden Horde and its armies destroyed Moscow and brought horror and devastation into Poland and Hungary, so that for centuries the people of eastern Europe prayed in their churches "From the fury of the Mongols, good Lord, deliver us." They ruled there and took tribute from Russia for two hundred years. Jagatai and his sons held the central part of the empire, and Tuli the east. These conquests of Jenghis and his family, this outpouring of Tartar people on the civilized lands of Asia, left its mark everywhere and can never be forgotten in the history of that

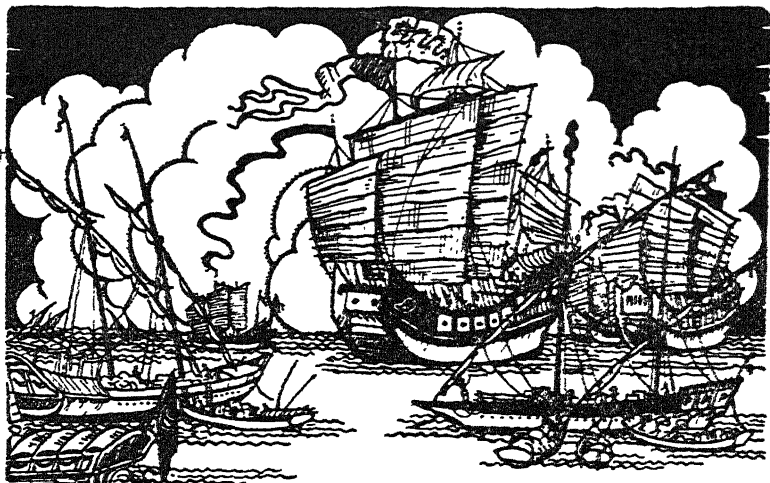
great continent. It was Kublai, one of the sons of Tuli, who finally conquered China.

Although China was one of the nearest empires to the homeland of the Mongols, it was the last to be taken by them. Cathay, the northern empire, was not entirely conquered until 1234, and it was not until 1260, when Kublai was Grand Khan, that he resolved to add the Sung Empire to his vast domains. We need not follow the terrible story of its conquest. It was the first time in the history of China that the whole land had been in danger and for twenty years the Hundred Families fought desperately against this enemy who had never been defeated. Unfortunately, a worthless Emperor, who had given all his power to a treacherous minister, was on the throne, so there was little hope for the Empire.

On the whole, it was not such a cruel war as the Mongols usually waged, for Kublai had been taught by scholars, and his Tartar heart was softened by civilization. The general who led his armies was praised even by the Chinese historians, and when he finally took the capital, the lovely city of Hangchow, it was not harmed at all. Kublai, who had seen the riches of all of Asia, was amazed by the treasure that was sent to him from Hangchow, but his wife, as they looked at the precious things, wept suddenly and said, "It came to me just now that the Empire of the Mongols will end in this same way."

The Sung Emperor was taken prisoner, but his young son was sent by sea to the south. City by city the faithful defenders of his dynasty were driven back, until the Mongols, seizing the Chinese ships, surrounded the fleet of the boy Emperor, who had found no safe place to land. Seeing that there was no hope left, the Prime Minister took his young master on his shoulders and leaped into the sea, where they

were both drowned. After that the whole country surrendered, and Kublai Khan, grandson of Jenghis, Grand Khan of the whole Mongol Empire, was also lord of China.



Now good and evil often go hand in hand, like light and darkness, until you can hardly tell one from the other. It seemed that nothing but evil could come of these terrible wars of Jenghis and his sons, but that is not so. Good things and very interesting things came out of the destruction that they brought to such a large part of the world. For the conquests of Jenghis opened the way again between Europe and Asia; the East and the West came to know each other once more and for the first time in history, Europeans went to China and traveled freely through it.

The way across Asia was open only when the Tartar hordes were conquered, or when they themselves conquered the civilized nations, as they had done now. When Wu Ti of the Han Dynasty drove out the Huns, the caravan routes were

first opened ; when Tai Tsung defeated the Turks, merchants and friendly messengers went from Persia and Constantinople to China. Now again, the great continent was safe for any traveler, for the Mongols had smashed down every barrier and brought every nation between the Sea of Japan and the Mediterranean under their rule. And, when the wars were over, their rule was a peaceful one and as strict as the discipline of their armies. No one dared to disobey a law. It was said that a girl might carry a bag of gold from one end of Asia to the other and not be harmed. It was a good time to travel.

It happened also that Europe was particularly interested in Asia at this time. When the Turks had conquered the Arab Empire, they had taken Palestine, which was the holy land of all Christian people, because Christ had lived there and the Bible was written there. The Turks treated Christian pilgrims very badly, and it seemed a great shame to the people of Europe that the land where their Lord had lived and died should be in the hands of people who did not believe in him or his teachings. So they made war against the Turks and those wars are called the Crusades. The Crusades started about a hundred years before the Mongol invasions, but they were still going on in Jenghis's time, because the Christians never succeeded in holding Palestine, but fought for it again and again.

So it happened that French and German and English knights and soldiers were constantly coming over to Syria and Egypt and Palestine to fight, and there they saw the lovely things that were made in Asia. They found that their enemies had delicate clothes of silk and cotton that were very pleasant to wear, and that they ate delicious foods, seasoned with sugar and spices. People lived very simply in Europe at this time. They lived in stone castles or houses with rushes on the floors ;

they dressed in wool and linen, or in fur and leather ; their food was coarse and they ate it with their fingers.

Their civilization was still young ; they were just beginning to write great books and poetry, and just beginning to paint ; the splendid Gothic cathedrals were just being built. They liked the luxuries of Asia very much and began to trade with the people who lived along the east coast of the Mediterranean. Venice and Genoa, two sea-ports of Italy, became the centers of this new trade. Their ships sailed to Alexandria and to Constantinople and the Syrian ports, and brought back cargoes of silks and velvets, rugs and jewels, spices and fruits. They knew that these delightful things did not come from the lands they traded with, but from much farther away, from distant lands that they knew nothing about. They were eager to find those distant lands, to trade directly with them and to see them.

There were other men besides merchants who were interested in going to Asia. The people of Europe had been thoroughly frightened by the Mongols, and they had no idea when those terrible horsemen might return. They thought that if the Mongols became Christians, they would not do what they had done before. So the Pope, the head of the Christian church, and the King of France, both wrote to the Grand Khan, asking him to become a Christian. The letters were taken by monks of the order of St. Francis and these brave men were the first to travel into the unknown wildernesses of Asia. They went into Mongolia, to the Khan's capital, but they found that the Khan had no desire to be a Christian.

When they returned they wrote most interesting accounts of their journeys, of its hardships and dangers, and of the strange ways of the Tartars ; they wrote, too, of a rich and great land called Cathay, that lay beyond Mongolia, on the eastern ocean, which they had not seen, but had heard about. These ac-

counts made other men more eager to adventure into Asia, and to go even farther than the monks had gone. They wanted most of all to reach Cathay, for they knew that silk and treasure came from there.

And truly, Cathay was well worth visiting at this time. For Kublai Khan, although he was lord of most of Asia, loved China, or Cathay, the best of all his domains. He made his capital, not in Mongolia, but in Peking and, like so many other Tartars, he put on the civilization of China just as he put on its costume and ruled, as nearly as he could, like a Chinese emperor. In his day, the Middle Kingdom had its own fine civilization, its art and splendor, combined with the powerful and thorough government of the Mongols. There was no other country in the world that could compare with it.

As one traveled through it, it seemed that every acre of land was used and that every person in it was happily at work. For countries recover quickly from war. The green grain springs up and covers the trampled earth, and laughing children take the place of slaughtered men and women. The fields of China were rich with rice and barley and wheat, with peas and beans. The villages were so close to each other, that the cocks in one village could be heard in the next. The canals, which were like a network in some parts of the country, were busy with boats carrying rich manure into the fields or carrying the harvest to the village markets. The rivers were crowded with bigger craft loaded with merchandise for the cities, or tribute from the sea-ports for the capital. In every town there were skilled workmen in all the arts and there were splendid cities in every province.

The sea-ports of China were busy and fascinating places. The harbors of Hangchow, Fuchow, Chinchow (chow means city) and Canton were filled with vessels of every size and

build. Out of them sailed the majestic Chinese junks, the biggest vessels known at that time. They had four decks, with comfortable private cabins for merchants and travelers ; they had four masts with high, square sails, and oars so big that it took ten or fifteen men to swing one of them. They carried a crew of hundreds of men, with hundreds of soldiers besides to defend them from pirates. There were smaller ships, too, of course, with one or two decks. They seemed to weather storms very well, and the only thing their captains feared was going aground, for then there was no way to get them off again. These proud vessels carried cargoes of silk and sugar, ginger and rhubarb, precious wares of lacquer and porcelain and jade. Compasses were used on both the Arab and Chinese ships, so that they need not follow the coasts but could sail across the wide spaces of the Indian Ocean and the China Seas.

What a delightful place these harbors must have been and what fun the Chinese boys must have had watching the big ships load and unload ! They could tell by the smell what was in some of the bales that the laborers carried off the ships on their backs, or slung on a pole between two men's shoulders. Those were sacks of cloves, that was pepper, and this was camphor ; those blocks and planks were of fragrant sandalwood to be carved into statues and ornaments or to be turned into incense ; they came from the islands in the southern ocean. How the boys wished they could open the bales of cloth and see the damasks and brocades from Persia, the thin cotton fabrics that one could see through, dotted or striped or span-gled with gold ! In those chests, bound and carried so carefully, there were probably pearls and amber, bars of gold and silver, and see, those two men could hardly carry that great tusk of ivory.

Here was an Arab ship with long, pointed sails like swal-

lows' wings, whose sailors were unloading incense and coral and glass, jewels and rugs and ebony. How dark and keen their bearded faces were, so different from the smooth-skinned, small-nosed Chinese! Here were sailors from Java, with a figured cloth around their strong brown hips, here were Hindus, with turbans wound around their heads. There was a chatter of foreign tongues, and the flashing of white teeth in dark faces, for the sailors laughed with pleasure because they had landed safely after the dangerous days at sea.

Every bit of the cargo had to be carried to the government warehouses, for all this foreign trade was carefully managed by inspectors and customs officers. A part of the goods was taken by the government as duty; the rest was delivered to the owner and could be sold by him as he chose. All this was done very honestly and with great fairness to the foreigner. While the merchants waited to sell their goods or for a favorable wind to take them home, they traveled into neighboring cities or sometimes up to the capital. For long before European merchants reached China, the Arabs had come there. There were so many Mohammedans in China in Kublai's time that in each big city there was a colony of them and any Mohammedan traveler was handed over to the head man of the colony, who was responsible for his welfare and for his good conduct while he stayed in the country. Some of these men have left most interesting letters and accounts of their travels.

Along every highroad in China, they said, there were excellent inns where every comfort was provided and which were fit for a king to stay in. These were found every twenty-five or thirty miles. And every three miles there was a post-station where the Emperor's postmen lived, the runners who carried messages and letters from one end of the vast Empire to the

other. Those were trained men and were ready for their work night or day. The first man, let us say, started from Canton with an important letter. He ran at top speed for three miles to the nearest post-station; around his waist he wore a broad belt all hung with bells that rang as he ran, and as soon as the sound of those bells was heard, another runner, dressed in just the same way, came out to meet him, took the letter from him and ran as fast as he could to the next station. And so the letter was handed on from one to another and traveled day and night, as fast as a man could run.

If there was any especially important or urgent message, horsemen carried it, who also wore bells and who galloped the three miles and handed the message to the next courier just as the foot-runners did. In this way, the Grand Khan kept in touch with all the cities and the countries of which he was the lord and every day runners came, sometimes on foot and sometimes in the saddle, to the high gates of Peking.

Kublai had built a mighty city there and a palace, each of whose four walls was a mile long. Straight, wide streets ran through the city, bordered with handsome houses, and it was surrounded by a wall, twenty-four miles around and thirty feet high, strong walls that sloped in toward the top, with massive gates on each of the four sides. Outside the walls, the suburbs stretched away in all directions, filled with houses and gardens. Peking was a convenient capital, for it was easily reached from Mongolia, Manchuria, Korea and China itself, and was in line with the caravan routes into the west. But it was not in the most fertile part of China, for the most of the rice and other grains were raised in the Yangtze Valley. How was he to feed his great city?

The Grand Canal, which was begun by the Marquis of Lu

in 486 B.C. and was carried down to Hangchow by the Sui Emperors in the Period of Darkness,* reached from Hangchow to the Hwai River. Kublai decided to continue it up to Peking, and sent hundreds of thousands of workmen to dig it out. For seven years they labored, digging the canal between river and river and between one lake and another, until it reached the very gates of Peking. It was banked with stone, and the earth that was dug out of it was made into two raised highroads, one on either side of the canal. What a wonderful work it was! It ran for more than six hundred miles from Peking to Hangchow, a quiet inland waterway, and millions of bushels of rice were sent upon it up to the capital, and boats of all kinds crowded it, carrying merchandise and the customs duties from the southern ports.

Kublai divided his time between Peking, which the Mongols called Cambaluc, and a summer palace where he spent his time in hunting. He did not hunt as his grandfather Jenghis had done, with a swift horse under him and a falcon on his wrist. Indeed no! He was carried in a pavilion set on the backs of four elephants. He lay under its gilded roof on silken cushions, and when his attendants saw a bird to chase they opened a part of the roof and let the Grand Khan watch his falcons kill the prey; if they were hunting animals, a window was slid back and the Khan saw his leopards slip from their leash and bound off in pursuit.

* See page 171.



ONE DAY into his audience hall came some envoys returning from Persia, from the court of Kublai's brother who ruled that part of his Empire. After they had made their obeisance, they had news for him. "As we came through Bokhara," they said, "we met two Frankish merchants, and we persuaded them to come here with us, for we knew that your Majesty had never seen any Franks, and would enjoy speaking with them. They are intelligent men, and speak our language well." By "Franks" they meant Europeans, and Kublai was delighted, and called the two men in immediately.

Although all Europeans were called Franks, these men were Italians, from the city of Venice, two brothers by the name of Polo, and all that the envoys said about them was true. The Emperor asked them all sorts of questions, about their government and their church, and how their kings went to battle. They answered him honestly and sensibly and he often talked with them. After they had stayed in his court for a while, he asked them to take a message from him to the Pope, for he knew much more about Europe than the Europeans knew about China. "Ask the Great Pope," he said, "to send me a hundred men of the Christian faith ; wise men who can talk well, and who can prove by their words that the law of Christ is the best religion and that all others are false. If they can do this, I and all my people will become Christians and belong to the Church. And bring me also, some of the sacred oil from the lamp in the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem."

All this the Polo brothers promised to do and they had a very comfortable journey home, as they were treated with great kindness and courtesy everywhere. Years went by, and nothing was heard of them. But in the year 1275 they presented themselves again at court and kotowed before the Emperor with their heads to the ground. As they rose, he saw

that there was a third traveler with them, a young man hardly more than twenty, who had kotowed very properly with them. "And who is that?" he asked. "Sire," said one of the brothers, "it is my son and your servant." "He is welcome, too," said the Khan, and that day there was much rejoicing in the palace, and the courtiers crowded about the three Venetians, asking them every sort of question. They learned to their sorrow that the Polos had not been able to bring with them even one Christian teacher, for there was trouble in the church at that time and no one seemed to be interested in accepting the extraordinary offer that the Khan had made. They had brought the holy oil, however, from Jerusalem.

Now the young man, whose name was Marco, was quick and clever; he learned to speak and to write several languages, made himself useful about the court and had pleasant manners. Kublai liked him very much and before long began to send him on missions to various parts of the country. Since he himself could not travel much, he was very curious about his Empire and wanted to know how the people lived and what they did in different parts of it. "I had far rather hear about the strange things and the manners of the different countries you have seen," he said to Marco, "than only be told of the business you went upon." Marco was quite as much interested as his royal master, and had a keen eye and a good memory. He told Kublai about the people and the animals and the countries that he saw; he told what they raised and how they dressed and any queer customs that they had, and the Khan spent many pleasant hours listening to young Marco's tales of travel. So he kept him in his employ, sending him here and there, and Marco had the most wonderful chance in the world to see nearly the whole of China.

He loved the country and admired its people, noticing, as

all travelers did, their politeness and self-control. "They bow to each other with cheerful faces and great politeness ; they behave like gentlemen and eat very properly. They show great respect for their parents. You hear no feuds or noisy quarrels ; in their business dealings they are honest and truthful and there is so much good will and neighborly feeling that you would think that all the people in one street were of the same family. They treat the foreigners who visit them for trade with great cordiality, and entertain them in the most winning manner, giving them every help and advice in their business." He traveled through the west, through Shensi, Szechuan and Yunnan, into Tibet and Burma ; he went down the east coast to Hangchow, which he thought the most beautiful city in the whole world.

Hangchow was the old capital of the Sung Emperors, and Marco says that it was a hundred miles around. It was built partly on the water, with canals for streets, like his own home, Venice ; fine stone bridges crossed the canals and sea-going vessels came up to its wharves, although it was up the river from the ocean itself. Just west of the city was a lovely lake. "All around it," says Marco, "are erected beautiful palaces and mansions, of the richest and most exquisite structure you can imagine, belonging to the nobles of the city. In the middle of the lake are two islands, on each of which stands a rich, beautiful and spacious building, furnished in such a style as to seem fit for the palace of any emperor. And when any of the citizens wished to hold a marriage feast or to give any other entertainment, it used to be done at one of these palaces.

"On the lake are numbers of boats and barges of all sizes for parties of pleasure. The inside is covered with ornamental painting in gay colors, with windows all around that can be shut or opened, so that a party at table can enjoy all the beauty

and variety of the views on both sides as they pass along. For on one side lies the city in its entire length, with its numberless palaces, temples, monasteries and gardens, full of lofty trees, sloping to the shore."

Many other travelers can hardly find words to express their admiration for this lovely city of Hangchow. Even a sober monk wrote about it: "It is the greatest city in the world, so great indeed that I should scarcely dare venture to tell of it, but that I have met in Venice plenty of people who have been there."

For although the Polos were the first European travelers to reach China, they were not the last to visit it during the century that it was under Mongol rule. Other merchants and other travelers came and went, and Christian monks built churches in Peking and other cities and delighted the Great Khan with the singing of their choirs. For Kublai allowed people of all religions to settle in China and to build their churches there. But he himself and all the Mongols had become Buddhists, since the Polos had been unable to bring them any Christian teachers.

Of all the travelers who went to the East, Marco Polo is the most important because of the book that he wrote on his return. In that book you can read of his whole journey, and his travels in China and his voyage home by sea, around India, to Persia, for we have not time to tell it here. His countrymen thought that he was lying when he told them all that he had seen; he said so often that the Grand Khan had "millions of this" and "millions" of that, that they nicknamed him "Messer Marco Milioni," which means "Mr. Marco Millions."

Yet they could not forget his stories, nor the stories that other travelers told about Cathay and India and the islands in the southern sea. The merchants and sailors of Europe dreamed

of the rich cities a hundred miles around and of the treasures of those distant lands ; monks prayed with folded hands that those great kingdoms might all believe in Christ and become a part of the greater Kingdom of God. You shall see what happened as men tried to make those dreams come true, and the astonishing adventures that they had as they found their way to Cathay.





CHAPTER 14

THE MING DYNASTY [1368-1644]

IT IS a strange thing that the Mongols, who seemed to hate all mankind, should have been the ones to open the way between China and Europe, and that during their rule foreigners of all nations should have traveled in the most friendly and safe way through the most distant parts of Asia. It is a strange thing, too, that those same Mongols, who caused so much suffering and sorrow, should have brought into China some of the pleasantest and gayest things in its life. It is quite true, however. During the Mongol Dynasty, which is called the Yuan, and which lasted from 1280 to 1368, the theatre and the novel provided amusement for everyone in China, from the peasant in his fields to the Emperor behind the high walls of his palace. And both of these amusements, which are enjoyed just as much now as they were then, owed much to the Tartar conquerors of China.

While the Mongols were still living their hard, rough life

on the northern plains, while they were shepherds and did not know how to read or to write, they loved to listen to stories. They had story-tellers who recited endless tales about the heroes of their race and about ancient wars and quarrels. When they became masters of China and stepped into its rich and complicated civilization, they respected the Classics, and the poetry and wisdom of the scholars, but they really preferred a good lively story. So they encouraged the acting of plays and the writing of novels. Soon stages were seen in every village, in every wealthy house, in the imperial palace and in the temples of the gods. For the gods, too, seemed to love a good play. And many excellent plays were written, and many delightful novels.

The Chinese loved entertainment as well as the Tartars. From the earliest time story-tellers, fortune-tellers, acrobats, and jugglers had been very popular among them. In the ancestral sacrifices and in the worship of the gods there had always been stately dances, which sometimes showed, in pantomime, a famous battle or scene in history. These were very much like acting. Nevertheless, the drama grew very slowly. This is partly because literature was so much honored. In China, the written word is a sacred thing. A piece of paper with character written or printed on it, must not be carelessly thrown away or trodden underfoot; special places are provided in every town where paper may be thrown and burned, and any scraps of printed matter are carefully picked up and put there. Only wise and serious things were recognized by the scholars as "literature." A mere story was too light to deserve that name and a scholar would not deign to read a play or a novel. But when the Tang Dynasty came, with all its love of art and beauty, the drama, too, was recognized as an art. Ming Huang, in his famous college which was called "The Pear Garden,"

trained boys and girls for the theatre and had them give plays to delight Yang Kwei Fei. In memory of this school, actors even now are known as "Students of the Pear Garden." Then, when the Mongols came, with their carefree Tartar ways and their lack of learning, the stage and the romance were given the place that they have had ever since.

The Chinese stage was very simple, as simple as the stage in Shakespeare's time. It was just a raised platform at one end of a hall. More often it stood in the open air, in front of a village temple, in the corner of a market-place, or in a courtyard of some big house. The only wall, which was at the back, was hung with gaily colored silk hangings, and there were two doors, one at the left and one at the right, which led into the actors' dressing-room. The actors entered by the right-hand door and went out by the door at the left. There was no curtain and no scenery.

But though the stage was very simple, the costumes were more gorgeous than any that we see in the West. They were like fairy-tale costumes, far more splendid than any that were worn in real life. A warrior wore a long, stiff robe, brightly colored and richly embroidered, down to his feet, which were adorned with shoes four inches high. To his back were attached four banners which stood far above his head and beyond his shoulders, forming a splendid background for his gay headdress and his painted face. The headdress, which stood out six or eight inches around his face, was decorated with big balls or pompons of many colors, and with two pheasant's feathers five or six feet long, which curved gracefully above the banners at his back, and swayed about him as he walked or fought. His face was painted fantastically, and he often wore a false beard of long straight black hair that reached to his waist. He was indeed a magnificent figure and it took a

good actor, and a good acrobat, to carry the costume with dignity and to perform the dances that a warrior usually performed in the course of a play. For if two warriors had a fight, they did not really fight, but danced an elaborate sword-dance which, with shoes four inches high, a huge headdress and four flags on one's back, was not easy to do. Ministers and scholars, barbarians and fine ladies were also magnificently dressed, and even farmers and clowns were clothed in silks.

The Chinese audience could tell a good deal about the people in the play even before they spoke. If a beautifully dressed person came on the stage carrying a whisk of horsehair in his hand, they knew that he was a god or a spirit; if a warrior carried a whip, they knew that he was on horseback, and if a banner was carried behind him, he was supposed to be at the head of a thousand soldiers. If there were five banners, then five thousand soldiers were following him. If an official's face was painted white, one knew that he was bad, and that he would probably betray his emperor in the course of the play, but if the face was painted red, that showed that he was honest and good. The actor's faces were often painted in bands and swirls of colors, and the audience could tell by the make-up the character and the profession of each person.

There was more make-believe in Chinese plays than in most Western ones, because the stage was so simple. If the hero had to climb over a high mountain there was no scenery to help him. The stage attendants, who were dressed in plain, dark clothes, piled up some tables and chairs and the hero climbed over those, acting his part so well that one believed that he was really laboring over rocks and cliffs and through wind and storm. When the heroine, who was dressed in bright embroidered robes, with long sleeves that hung a foot below her hands, and a headdress gay with pompons and hanging

tassels, wanted to go out in a boat, the attendants brought out a flag with a fish painted on it, to represent water, and the lady's slaves swept the dry floor with their oars.

Since there was no curtain, everything that was done on the stage was seen by the audience ; the attendants came out and piled up a mountain, arranged the chairs and tables for a feast, or handed oars to the slaves, and no one paid any attention to them ; when a man was killed, he got up and walked off the stage and it did not seem at all strange to the audience. The theatre is all make-believe anyway, so what difference did it make ?

The plays were usually rather short, but sometimes six or eight were given on one programme, one right after the other, so that the performance lasted all afternoon and evening, and people came and went, and stayed as long as they liked. When a company of actors went to a village in the country, they acted one play after another, day after day, to the great delight of all the villagers. An actor's life was hard ; he began his training as a boy and was taught gymnastics, dancing, and singing ; he must learn a great many parts, for his company was expected to give a great many plays, and he must act for long hours or even days at a time. He must know how to sing, because Chinese plays were more like our operas than our plays ; there was always music, and parts of the play were always sung. The singing and the speaking were done in a high falsetto voice.

The audience came in and out, chatting with friends, drinking tea and eating cakes, and it sometimes paid no more attention to the play than we pay to the music in a restaurant. When there was a thrilling scene, however, all eyes were turned toward the stage, and fine acting was rewarded with shouts of applause, for the Chinese do not clap their hands as we do.

There were historical plays, plays of love and family life, plays about gods and spirits, and farces that kept the audience in roars of laughter. And there were many plays, as you can imagine, about the love of children for their parents, or the devotion of a young wife to her husband's family. The Five Relationships, and that love of goodness that is such a powerful part of Chinese life, were shown again and again in the plays. You can always be sure in a Chinese theatre, that the villain will be punished and that the good will triumph.



LET US PRETEND that we are in a Chinese town at the end of the Yuan Dynasty. A band of rebels that threatened our neighborhood, has been defeated and scattered and we are giving a festival to Kwan Ti, the god of war, whose temple stands on one side of the market square. Offerings have been made to him, and he has been thanked for protecting us, fireworks are popping in the dusty square outside. A rich citizen has hired a band of actors to give some plays and a stage has been put up against the temple wall. The people sit on benches or stand around three sides of the raised platform and wait eagerly for the performance to begin. The orchestra, with flutes, stringed instruments, drums, cymbals and gongs, sits at the back of the stage, against the gaudy hangings.

The right door opens and a gorgeous figure strides on the stage. He is dressed as a warrior and two pheasants' feathers sweep back from his headdress; he is followed by soldiers

carrying banners ; and you can tell from his make-up that he is a barbarian. He comes forward and introduces himself to us. "I am Han Shen-yu," he tells us in his high stage voice, "the old dweller in the sandy desert. The wild chase is our trade ; battle and conquest are our chief business. I am the true descendant of the Empire of Han, for, centuries ago, the Emperor of Han gave his daughter to my ancestor in marriage. I have come to ask for an imperial princess to be my wife."

He goes out with his soldiers, and from the right hand door a man enters dressed in the robes of a minister, with a round hat, a long false beard and a face painted white. "I am Mao Yen-Show," he says, "a minister of the Emperor of Han. I have deceived and flattered the Emperor until I am the only one whom he trusts. Everyone in the palace fears me. My chief work is to keep the Emperor away from his wise advisers and to surround him with pleasures." He steps back and kneels with his head to the ground as the Emperor enters, clothed in yellow dragon-embroidered robes, and high headdress. "Behold in us," he says to the audience, "the Emperor Yuen Ti of the race of Han. During the ten generations of our dynasty my race alone has ruled the world. But alas ! I have not as yet a wife. The palace is empty and desolate. What shall I do ?" The minister suggests that he send all through the country commanding the most beautiful girls between the ages of fifteen and twenty to come to the palace. There their portraits will be painted and shown to the Emperor so that he may choose his queen from among them. The Emperor agrees to this plan and tells his minister to carry it out, and they leave the stage.

The minister comes back immediately and tells us that he

has searched the whole land and brought ninety-nine lovely girls from whom the Emperor will choose his queen ; the rest will remain in the palace, too, as concubines and servants. "I found one," he says, "who was perfectly beautiful. I told her that if she would pay me enough I could have her chosen as Empress, but her parents were poor and did not have the price. I was going to leave her there at home, but I thought of a better revenge. I brought her to the palace and had her portrait painted and then I spoiled the portrait and made her look very ugly. So she will live here in the palace but the Emperor will never look at her and she will spend her life in sorrow and loneliness." He goes out and the next person who comes in is the lovely girl herself, who comes forward with little tottering steps because her feet are bound. "I am Chao Kun," she says. "I was born in Chengtu city and my father is a farmer." She tells us of the wickedness of the minister and bemoans her sad fate. She takes her lute and sings a plaintive little song. Just then the Emperor comes in, with an attendant carrying a lantern, which shows us that this is happening at night. He sees her, notices her beauty, asks her who she is and she tells him all that the minister has done. The Emperor falls deeply in love with her, makes her an imperial princess, and orders that the minister be beheaded at once.

The minister escapes, however, and we next see him, still bent on mischief and revenge, in the camp of the Tartar king, Han Shenyu. The Tartar chief, you remember, wanted a Chinese princess in marriage. The minister, wretch that he is, shows him the true portrait of Chao Kun and advises him to ask for her. Han Shenyu falls in love immediately with the portrait and sends a messenger to the Emperor demanding

the princess for his wife. "If you refuse, I will invade the south with countless hosts. Your hills and rivers shall be ruined and your cities sacked."

This is bad news indeed! When the messenger comes to the palace, Chao Kun is painting her pretty face at the mirror; the Emperor, foolishly in love, has left his audience hall and is looking over her shoulder. "Reflected in that mirror," he says to himself, "she looks like the moon-goddess." The Tartar message is like a thunder-bolt in the midst of this happy scene. The dynasty was weak and near its end; the Emperor knew that he had no armies that could withstand a Tartar host.

Chao Kun offers to sacrifice herself for the safety of the country. "It is your handmaid's duty," she says to the Emperor, "to brave death in your service. I will willingly marry the Tartar king for the sake of peace, and my name will always be remembered in history. But alas! How can I forget my love for your Majesty?" The Emperor weeps and curses his fate and his worthless officers and armies, but there is no help for it. The princess puts on a beautiful robe and headdress and goes with the Tartar envoys. "How shall I bear the winds and frosts of that strange land?" she cries weeping. "Alas! It has often been said that great beauty and great misfortune go hand in hand." The Emperor goes with her a little way and they part with great sorrow.

We next see the princess welcomed with honor by the Tartar king. They travel together, that is, they go around the stage, until the attendants come out with flags on which fishes are painted. "What place is this?" asks the princess. "It is the river of the Black Dragon," they tell her, "the frontier of the Tartar territory." They stop and camp there and food and wine is brought to the princess. She takes a cup

of wine and stands facing south ; she is a lovely figure with her gay bride's headdress and long silken robes. "Great King," she says, "I pour this wine as an offering to the south ; it is my last farewell to my emperor. Emperor of Han," she cries, "my life here is finished. I will wait for you in the next world." And before they can stop her, she leaps into the river, that is, she gives a little jump and falls to the ground where the attendants stand with their fish flags, and we know that she is drowned. The Tartar king rushes to the river's brink. "Alas, alas," he cries, "she is gone ! Let a tomb be built for her here by the bank of the river. And let the Emperor's minister be sent back to him, for this has all been his fault. I will return to my old friendship with the house of Han and renew our former peaceful relations." So the lovely Chao Kun made peace by her death, and the wicked minister was sent back to China, where we can be sure that he met a most uncomfortable death.

The audience enjoys this play immensely ; it has been well acted and splendidly costumed and the music has been good. The gongs and cymbals and shrill stringed instruments have made a great noise at the Tartar camp, and the flutes played mournfully during the sad parts. Everyone knows the story of Chao Kun, and it is said that her little tomb can still be seen on the bank of the Amur River and that it is always green, even when the surrounding country is brown and barren.

The moment the last actor makes his exit^e in that play, a new play starts for our amusement without any intermission at all. From the right-hand door a little family enters hurriedly and fearfully, a man, his wife and two little boys five or six years old. They tell us that they are fleeing from their home because a Tartar army is approaching and their

village will soon be taken. They tell us that one of the little boys is their only child and that the other is their nephew, the son of a brother who has died. Their nephew's mother is away on a visit and they had to hurry away without her. The little boys are very tired and cannot walk much farther ; the wife cannot carry either of them, of course ; she can hardly walk at all on her tiny bound feet. The husband carries first one child and then the other, but even then they go very slowly and the boys cry and stumble and fall.

Now they hear the drums and the shouts of the Tartars and hear the screams of the people who were left behind in the village. They must go faster, or they will all be killed. The husband stops. "My wife," he says, "we must leave our son behind us here. I can carry one boy and we can escape, but I cannot carry both." "But why must we leave our son ?" asks the wife, weeping. "Our nephew," answers the man, "is the only son of my dead brother ; he is the only one who can carry on my brother's family and offer the ancestral sacrifices to his spirit. We are young, and even if we lose our son, we may yet be blessed with another. Someone may find him and save his life."

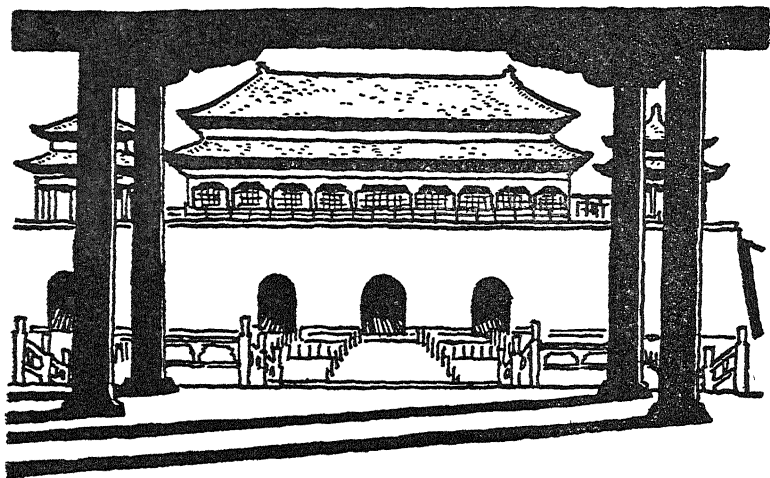
His wife sadly agrees and they put their little boy on a branch of a mulberry tree by the roadside and tie him tightly to it so that he cannot fall. If he is hungry he can reach some of the berries. Of course there is no tree on the stage, but an attendant puts a chair on a table and they tie the boy to it and act it out so well that we can see the road and the tree and the distant village as if they were really there. They start to go on, but the nephew throws himself on the ground, weeping and screaming and refusing to leave his little cousin behind. The man picks him up, however, and the three go off with breaking hearts, while the shouts of the enemy grow

louder and nearer. Other people are fleeing, too, and among them who should come along but the nephew's mother, the aunt of the little boy on the mulberry tree, who has returned from her visit to find her home empty and all the village fleeing before the Tartars. She sees the boy and of course takes him and saves him. She joins the others soon after and it all ends very happily.

Our hearts have been wrung, however, by Chao Kun's suicide and the sufferings of this little family, and we are ready for the comedy that comes next, which is full of the most absurd clownishness and foolery. And so we sit through the whole afternoon, seeing play after play, eating candy and fried melon-seeds, and enjoying ourselves immensely. We do not pay anything for the show, for our wealthy citizen has paid the actors and the plays are free for all to see.

The novels that were written at this time were sometimes historical and sometimes love stories or tales of family life. One of the most popular novels in China is the *Story of the Three Kingdoms* a long book that tells about the time after the fall of the Han Dynasty, when China was divided into three kingdoms and when many doughty deeds were done. Kwan Ti, the god of war, was a hero of this time who was made a god because of his strength and bravery. But even though novels were very well written and had delightful and exciting plots, they were frowned upon by scholars, and were never acknowledged by them as real literature.

Nevertheless, many people have laid aside the Classics and burned their little reading lamps late into the night finishing a novel, and all sorts of people, rich and poor, wise and ignorant, have spent many happy hours watching the fanciful, gorgeous, rhythmical plays in the Chinese theatres.



THE MONGOLS held the whole of China for less than a hundred years. When they were on horseback, with a little leather bag filled with dried milk, and a few strips of meat for their food, when they dressed in sheepskins and lived through any weather in their felt tents, they were more powerful than any other men in the world. But in a Chinese palace, surrounded with luxury, clothed in silk, eating and drinking far too much, they lost their boldness and their strength. They did not know how to live in these conditions. And the Emperors who came after Kublai did not govern wisely, even though they followed the Chinese forms and customs. They sacrificed to their fierce ancestors, they worshipped at the altars of Heaven and Earth outside the gates of Peking, and at the altars of the land and the grain inside the walls, but they did not really understand the teachings of Confucius which were the foundation of the great Empire which they ruled. Mongol governors and officials ruled the people and were, of course, hated by them. All through the country there

were terrible floods, droughts, and earthquakes, and it was believed that these happened when divine laws were broken and when Heaven was displeased.

Among the rebels who arose to drive out these Tartar rulers was a young man named Chu. He was the son of a poor laborer, and he had joined a Buddhist monastery when his parents died and when he found himself alone and penniless. He did not like the life of a monk, however, and he soon left the monastery and joined a band of rebels. In a short time he had proved himself an able, wise and generous leader, and by 1356 he had taken Nanking and was at the head of a powerful army.

The Chinese are quick to recognize a leader and to flock to his banner. Chu proved worthy of their trust and after twelve years of fighting he had driven the Mongols, who were weakened by their long and easy life in China, out of Peking and beyond the Great Wall. The Flowery Land was once more in the hands of its own people and everywhere they crowded about Chu with joyful shouts of "Ten thousand years! Ten thousand years!" (This means "May you live ten thousand years," and is said only to an Emperor.) He took the title of Hung Wu and gave his dynasty the name of Ming, which means the Bright or Shining Dynasty.

His reign was not an easy one; there was the usual trouble that came with any change of dynasty. The Mongols, although they could not regain their lost empire, made constant war along the northern frontiers, and the western provinces of Szechuan and Yunnan refused to recognize the new Emperor.

Szechuan is a beautiful and romantic province. Its name means the "Four Rivers" and if you look at the map you will easily see the four big rivers, running from north to

south into the Yangtze, that give it its name. Its capital city, Chengtu, lies in a broad, thickly populated valley every acre of which is green with grain or vegetables or orchards. This valley was once a rocky useless stretch of land, but a governor who was sent there by Shi Huang Ti started a wonderful work of irrigation which has made it one of the most fertile places in China.

A swift river ran through the valley which overflowed dangerously nearly every summer and whose current was so strong that it could not be put to any use. This wise governor of Shi Huang Ti's divided the river into two streams and then divided each of those streams again and again until he had split the river into a hundred little rivers that flowed all over the valley and could be used to water all its fields. Besides, with so many channels there was no longer any danger of flood. Many other governors after him kept up this good work, so that now this valley is like a great garden from one end to the other and is one of the loveliest places in China. Beyond it on the north and west, high mountains rise up like a wall, so steep that the roads through them are made of steps cut in the rocks. The hills are thickly forested and usually covered with clouds. It is said that the dogs bark in Szechuan when the sun shines, because it shines so seldom. Poets and painters have loved this province, and monasteries lift their roofs among its misty mountain-tops.

It has always been a place that loves independence and Chengtu has often been the capital of a short-lived kingdom. It is famous for its art and architecture, and the first printing was done there. Now it refused to recognize the new Ming Dynasty and set up a kingdom of its own. Its neighbor province, Yunnan, which means "South of the clouds," was

held by a Mongol prince. Yunnan is also very mountainous, cut through by river-gorges and hard to travel through. In both Szechuan and Yunnan there are many of the "wild tribes" that the Black-haired People drove into the mountains when they first settled the land.

In spite of the wars both in the north and the south, Hung Wu, with the help of his splendid general, Su Ta, pacified the whole Empire, whose northern border was once more the Great Wall. He drove back the Mongols and sent his governors to Szechuan and Yunnan. We hear again from him the words of a true Chinese ruler. "You are now going to march north," he said to Su Ta as his general was starting to drive back a Mongol attack. "When Kublai took a city, he destroyed all who were in it, but this is not my method. Do not slaughter recklessly. Do not burn the houses of the people. Do not even think of killing the Mongols unless they resist."

And when the country was at peace, he said to the people, "My wish is to bring back again the government of the Sages. Be loving and obedient to your father and your mother ; respect your elders and your superiors ; live in harmony with your neighbors ; educate your children ; do your work peacefully, and do no evil." These were good words which the Black-haired People had been used to hearing for thousands of years ; they must have been well content to hear them again from the lips of the Son of Heaven.

The Ming Dynasty, which Hung Wu founded, lasted for nearly three hundred years. During the first two centuries there were small wars on all sides, but nothing that threatened the freedom of the Empire and nothing that ruined its fields or its cities. There were Mongol raids, wars in Turkestan, rebellions in distant provinces, and troubles along the sea-coast. Kublai Khan, believing that the Mongols should be

lords of the whole earth, had sent out an enormous fleet to conquer Japan. Most of the ships were destroyed in a tempest ; the soldiers who succeeded in landing on the islands were furiously defeated by the Japanese and either killed or taken as prisoners. The Japanese had never forgiven this attempt to conquer their beautiful islands, and made several attacks on Chinese sea-ports. Since so many richly-laden vessels were sailing the seas, there were many pirates, and Japanese pirates were particularly troublesome.

The Chinese, however, were able to deal with all these difficulties, and the centuries of Ming rule were, on the whole, peaceful ones. The Hundred Families, under the rule of their own princes, lived the life that they loved best — a life of quietness and comfort, of busy work and deep enjoyment.

No travelers came from Europe into China during the first century and a half of the Ming Dynasty. The way across Asia was closed again, and it remained closed for a long, long time. When Jenghis Khan conquered most of western Asia, a small band of Turks had fled into Asia Minor to find safety there. Osman, the grandson of their first leader, built up a strong little state in Asia Minor and became the founder of the Turkish Empire and the modern country of Turkey. The Turks grew more and more powerful and in 1361, just before the Ming Dynasty was founded, they invaded Greece and began to conquer territory in Europe. This made it impossible for Europeans to travel into Asia by the northern routes, the way traveled by the Polos and the monks who had gone to China during the Mongol Dynasty.

Besides the wars with the Turks, there was other warfare going on in southwestern Asia. The descendants of Jenghis Khan had ruled in Persia and Kwaresm for over a century. There had been many quarrels among them and in about 1360,

at just the same time that the Ming Dynasty and the Turks were coming into power, a man named Timur took the lead among them. He was a descendant of one of the generals of Ogotai and is sometimes called Tamerlane. For thirty years he waged furious war through western Asia, from India into Europe. He plundered, slaughtered, burned and destroyed in true Mongol fashion. He met the strong young Turkish nation in battle and badly defeated it, carrying its Sultan, or king, off as his prisoner. He boasted that he would conquer China and feed his horses at the altar of St. Peter's church in Rome. Fortunately he died before he even tried to carry out either of these threats. He had no sons like the four sons of Jenghis, and his empire soon fell to pieces. The Turks, however, recovered from their defeat, grew strong again, conquered more and more land in Greece and the neighboring countries of Europe, and had a powerful fleet on the eastern Mediterranean Sea.

Of course, with all these wars, it was impossible for Europeans to trade with Eastern or Central Asia or to travel there. All trade by the northern routes was stopped by the beginning of the fifteenth century. A little still went on by way of Egypt and then by sea to India and China, until Egypt too, was conquered by the Turks. Venice and Genoa grew poor and the rich sea-ports of Europe which received and distributed the precious Eastern goods, were very quiet. "Grass grew in the fair and pleasant streets of Bruges, and sea-weed clustered about the marble halls of Venice." And the Chinese nearly forgot that they had been visited by those strange but interesting people whom they called the "Franks."

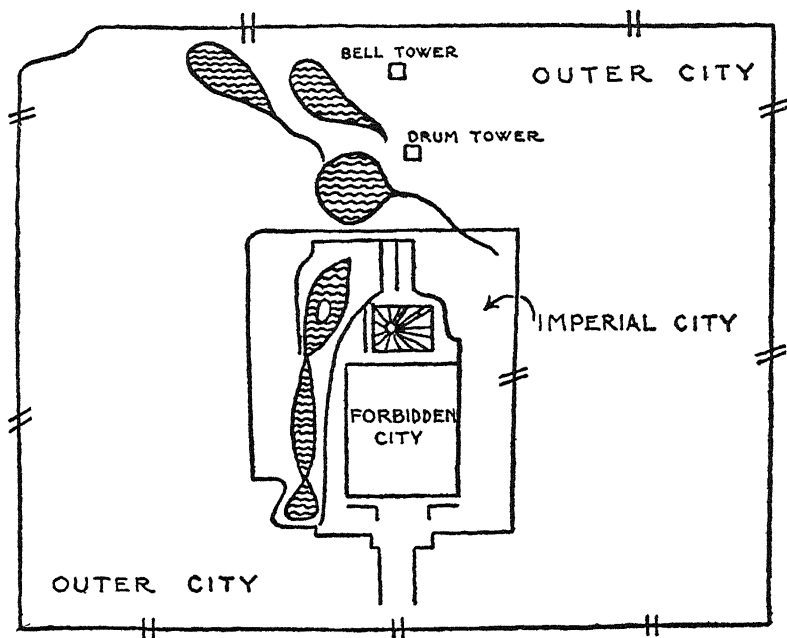
Although there was less trade by land, except with Turkestan and the nearby countries, China's sea-trade grew steadily. During the first part of the Ming Dynasty, the Middle Kingdom

held a very proud position in the southern seas. Yung Lo, the third Ming Emperor, sent a great fleet of sixty-two war vessels, carrying 37,000 soldiers, to visit all the lands from China to Africa. In the first two voyages the fleet went to Cambodia and the Malay Peninsula, to Siam, Java, Sumatra and over to Ceylon. Everywhere the admiral demanded tribute, and when it was not willingly given, he made such successful war that all the kingdoms he visited recognized China as mistress of the seas and obediently sent the tribute that was asked. Even Bengal, in India, sent gifts each year to Yung Lo's court.

The admiral led his fleet on several other voyages, sailing around India to the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea, visiting Persia and Arabia and several ports in eastern Africa. This fine array of vessels and of soldiers must have made the western countries realize that China was still the rich and powerful land whose fame had reached them centuries ago.

Hung Wu had made Nanking, on the Yangtze River, his capital, but Yung Lo, his son, moved northward to the Mongol capital, Peking. He built up the city on the foundations that Kublai had laid; he changed and repaired and rebuilt it, and the modern city of Peking, although it has grown and changed since his time, is still Yung Lo's city. He built its great walls which are forty feet high and as broad on top as a wide street. In the heart of the city he built another one, which is called the Imperial City; it has its own walls and gates and in it live the ministers and the generals and all the many officials who make up the court of the Emperor. Inside the Imperial City is still another one, walled and guarded, and this is the Forbidden City, which holds the palaces and halls and the wide courtyards where the Son of Heaven lived and ruled his Empire.

The Ming Emperors did all that they could to bring back the ancient Chinese civilization, much of which the Mongols had neglected. They restored the literary examinations, made them more strict, and established schools and libraries in every town and village ; they called scholars to the court and paid great honor to the members of the Han Lin Academy ; they encouraged all the arts.



Splendid buildings were put up : tombs with temples beside them where the spirits of former rulers could be worshipped, palaces, wide walls and massive gates for the principal cities, for in China every city and even the villages are walled. Roads were built, and bridges, some of which were arched in a half-circle, so that the bridge itself and its reflection in smooth

water formed a perfect round. Pagodas had been raised ever since Buddhism had come into China, for the form of the pagoda was brought from India. They always had an odd number of stories, anywhere from five to thirteen, for odd numbers are Yang and even numbers are Yin. On each story, at the points of their upturned eaves, bells were hung that rang in the wind and on festivals lanterns were also hung there. Pagodas brought good luck and were often built to attract good spirits to a certain place.

The good spirits of earth and sky, the stars, the water and the winds, were always considered when any important building was put up, and houses and tombs were placed where all the forces of nature were in harmony with each other. For that reason Chinese buildings seem to fit into the landscape and become a part of it, and to make it more lovely than it was without them.

There were many painters during this dynasty. Their work is not so great as that of the Sung artists, but the pictures are exquisite, and done with wonderful skill. There are many studies of birds and flowers; ducks among the reeds, sparrows on blossoming boughs, eagles on the gnarled branches of mountain trees. There are charming palace scenes, graceful groups of women in the porch of a pavilion, or coming down the low, broad steps into a courtyard shaded with trees and gay with flowers in porcelain pots.

Many new ways of decorating porcelain had been discovered. During the Sung Dynasty, you remember, each vase or bowl was glazed with only one color, soft green or greenish blue, red or purple or pure white. Now the potters had learned how to paint patterns and figures, flowers and animals, on their wares, and entirely new kinds of porcelain began to be made.

They had seen Persian pottery, which was gaily decorated with designs of different colors, and they wanted to do the same thing in porcelain. Porcelain, however, must be baked in a very hot fire, and very few colors could stand the heat. There was a beautiful blue, which the Persians made out of cobalt, and a splendid red, which the Chinese made of copper, both of which came safely through the furnaces. The potters painted their clay with these colors and then put a colorless, transparent glaze over them. The result was perfect. It was during the Ming Dynasty that the beautiful blue and white ware, which was later sent all over the world, was first made. The Chinese called the blue color "Mohammedan blue" because they had learned how to make it from the Persians.

They also learned how to use the colors that could not stand the very hot fire. First they painted the porcelain with the colors that could stand the heat, and glazed it and fired it. Then they painted the weaker colors on top of the glaze and baked them in an oven that was less hot. In this way they could use three colors and finally were able to use five. So they painted their porcelains with designs and flowers, with phœnixes and dragons and figures of every sort, from the heavenly gods to children playing with toys and kites. They also began to make at this time the "egg-shell" porcelain, so thin and delicate that it seemed as if it would break in one's hand. Hung Wu had great factories built at King-te-chen in the province of Kiangsi, and all the best potters of the Empire came there and worked, so that very little porcelain was made anywhere else. King-te-chen became an immense city of workshops and furnaces, for there was a great demand for porcelain, in China and in other countries.

Other arts flourished, too, under the rule of the Sons of Heaven. A new art, the use of enamel on metal, had been brought in by the Mongols, who learned it from the craftsmen of Constantinople. Delicate shapes were made of metal, usually of copper—boxes, vases, ornaments or bowls—and a strong enamel was used to decorate them. Sometimes little hollows were made in the metal, which were filled in with enamel; or else the design was outlined with a thin raised band of metal and then filled, between the bands, with enamel. A favorite color was turquoise blue, with designs of rose and yellow.



Lacquer-ware was an ancient art, but it was brought to perfection now. Lacquer is a varnish that comes from a tree; it is used on wood, for furniture, boxes, trays and such things. It is stained different colors and gold and silver dust is mixed with it; it has a smooth dull polish when it is finished. Sometimes it is laid on very thickly and then carved. It takes great patience to brush layer after layer on the wood, drying and smoothing each one before the next is laid on, until the lacquer is nearly half an inch thick. Then it is cut with a sharp tool,

and looks like very finely carved and colored wood. If you live in a city where there is an art museum, go there and look carefully at the exquisite shapes and designs of Chinese workmanship, for you will find out more about China from these than I can tell you in many pages.

The ancient materials, jade and bronze, were still well-loved. In the northern part of Peking, between the Imperial City and the outer walls, stood two great towers, the Drum Tower and the Bell Tower, which had been built by Kublai Khan. Yung Lo had them repaired and he set in one an enormous drum, whose sound could be heard all over the city, although its walls measured fourteen miles around. This drum struck the hours, day and night. Then he wanted a bell to hang in the other tower, a bell whose tones could be heard in the farthest corner of his capital. Such a big bell had never been cast before, and he ordered one of his officers, a man named Kwan Yu, to have it made and to let him know when it was ready. There is a story about this bell which is not written down in any Chinese history, but it has been kept in the hearts of the people for five hundred years, and so it is worth knowing.

They say that Kwan Yu called together the best bronze-workers in the country and told them what the bell must be. It must be the largest bell ever known and gold and silver must be mixed with its bronze, to give it a deep, beautiful tone. The master workmen and their many helpers melted and mixed the metals, and made the huge mold into which the metal must be poured to form the bell. The Emperor himself came to watch the casting. He and his courtiers and Kwan Yu stood on a gallery and looked down upon the vat of white-hot metal, which hissed and spat out little sparks; they held their wide sleeves before their faces to shut out the blinding heat. The vat was tipped up and with a roar the seething metal rushed

into the mold. Kwan Yu bowed to the ground before the Emperor, who praised him for his promptness in putting through the work and bade him send word to the palace as soon as the bell was cool and could be moved.

But alas! When the metal cooled and the mold was struck away, the workmen saw that they had failed. The bell was honey-combed with little holes; there was no need of striking it, for they knew that no true tone could come from such metal. The Emperor was informed, and was very angry. He ordered Kwan Yu to try again. Again the workmen used all their skill and all their knowledge, and again the bell was a failure. Kwan Yu trembled, not only from grief and disappointment, but from fear. How could he tell his imperial master of a second failure? He could not hide the fact, however, and he received from the Emperor a short, cold answer. The bell must be cast successfully or Kwan Yu would lose his head.

He went home sad and tired that night. In the courtyard of his home his daughter met him, his little Ko-ai, who was the joy of his heart. She was sixteen years old and as pretty as a blossom, with merry, tender black eyes, and eyebrows as delicate as the antennæ of a moth; she was as graceful as a willow-bough and as skillful at writing poetry as she was at embroidery. She was Kwan Yu's only child. She saw that her father was troubled, and asked him about the bell. Alas, had it failed again? "I wish I were a man, my father," she said earnestly, "so that I might help you to make this bell. But since I am only a girl, I will offer my prayers for you day and night, and you know that the prayers of a child for a beloved parent are always heard."

Next morning after Kwan Yu had gone back to the workshop, Ko-ai, with her servant, slipped out of the big gate in

the wall of their home and went to see an astrologer. Astrologers are people who can tell you what is going to happen by studying the positions of the stars and the planets. Ko-ai asked him about the bell, and he put on his spectacles and bent over his books for a long time. Finally he looked up. "Before that great bell can be successfully cast," he said, "the blood of a maiden must be mixed with its metal." Ko-ai went home, dazed. "The blood of a maiden must be mixed with its metal!" She shuddered, for she knew what melted metal was, and she knew that if any maiden's blood was to be mingled with it, that maiden was herself. What was she to do?

The day of the casting came; the bell must be perfect or Kwan Yu would die. Ko-ai begged to go with her father and begged so prettily and so earnestly that he finally consented to take her and her servant to the workshop with him. They stood on the gallery where the Emperor had stood, Kwan Yu with a heavy heart, and Ko-ai with a heart that beat so fast that she could hardly breathe. They looked down, half-blinded, at the hissing metal. "Ready!" shouted the master workman. "Pour it in!" Then, just as the laborers tipped the huge vat, there was a cry from the gallery, "For your sake, my father!" And the onlookers turned just in time to see little Ko-ai fling herself headlong into the pool of white-hot bronze.

There were cries of horror, but the vat could not be stopped. Ko-ai's servant clutched at her little mistress but only succeeded in catching her foot, whose tiny embroidered shoe came off in her hand. Kwan Yu tried to throw himself after his daughter, but the workmen held him back and finally carried him home, raving mad. A tragic silence reigned within the workshop while the great bell cooled.

The Emperor was told that the third trial had been made and he was told about Ko-ai. He came to see the bell taken from the mold. The mold was struck away and the huge shape, three times as tall as a man, stood there before them. There was no trace of Ko-ai, for the fierce heat had consumed every bit of her, but as the workmen looked they saw that the metal was perfect ; there was not one tiny hole or crack ; the surface was as smooth as silk and of a deep, beautiful color. They swung it up to a great beam that had been prepared for it and they struck it lightly with a block of wood. What a tone was that ! It filled the house and throbbed out into the streets, spreading like light through the air, a deep, full, glorious tone. They all listened to it with awe, for such a sound had never been heard before. Then, as it died away, they heard inside the bell a little high overtone that seemed to cry the Chinese word for "Shoe ! Shoe !" "Oh," they said, "it is Ko-ai ! It is little Ko-ai herself, calling for her shoe." For her servant, you remember, had caught her tiny shoe, when she leaped into the vat of metal.

The bell was hung in the tower north of the Imperial City and there it still hangs today. Every evening its deep tone was heard in every corner of the city and when people heard it they knew that it was time to lock their doors for the night and to shut the city gates until the next dawn. The people who lived near the bell-tower told their children to listen very carefully as the tone died away. "Be very quiet," they said, "and you will hear the voice of little Ko-ai." And as they stood very still and listened, they heard the high, wailing overtone that seemed to cry, "Shoe ! Shoe !"



CHAPTER 15

THE MING DYNASTY [1368-1644]

WHILE the Middle Kingdom was living in peace and contentment under the rule of the Ming emperors, wonderful things were happening in the rest of the world. Although the trade routes between Europe and Asia had been closed because of the wars of the Turks in Greece and the wars of Tamerlane, the people of Europe had not forgotten Cathay and India and the Spice Islands. The East was like a magnet that drew the hearts of merchants and sailors to it with a power that they could not resist. They read again and again the books of Marco Polo and the letters of the monks who had gone to Mongolia and to Peking. They sighed as they read of the long but perfectly safe journey over land by the old caravan routes to Cathay. That was no longer possible. They studied Marco Polo's route homeward by sea, his long voyage through the straits of Malacca, around India, across the Indian Ocean to the Persian Gulf. The way was clear enough, but how could they reach it? The Turks and the Sultans of Egypt would never allow a European boat to be launched on the Persian Gulf or the Red Sea. The continent of Africa lay like a great block between their Atlantic Ocean and the

Indian Ocean. Was it possible to sail around Africa and reach the East ?

In the westernmost part of Europe, as far away from China as it was possible to be in those days, on a cape that jutted out into the waves of the Atlantic, a man was working hard to solve this problem. He was Prince Henry, a son of the king of Portugal, and he gave his life to the study of navigation. Navigation means everything that has to do with the sailing of ships : the knowledge of mathematics and geography and astronomy, the use of the compass and the sextant and other instruments that show the position and direction of ships at sea. Prince Henry gathered about him scholars and sailors, wise men and brave ones, who were eager to learn, and willing to risk their lives in voyages of discovery. Under his direction and encouragement, ships were sent out that sailed farther and farther down the coast of Africa, passing one cape after another, hoping to reach the end of the land and to find a place where they could sail east.

Prince Henry died before even the Gulf of Guinea had been reached, but the work of discovery which he had started went on with growing eagerness. How exciting it was to explore the wind-blown seas, to find new and strange lands shining in the morning sun ! What dangers they faced in their little ships, with their crews of less than a hundred men ! There was no help to be had if their vessels were smashed to pieces in a tempest ; there was no way to get home again if they were shipwrecked on some far shore. Still they pressed farther and farther down the coast, and in 1486 Bartholomew Diaz, in a blinding storm, was carried around the Cape of Good Hope without knowing it. Only when his sailors forced him to turn homewards and they sailed back in the clear sunlight, he saw the cape that they had passed and realized that they

had found the southern end of the continent that had blocked their way.

This was great news. In 1497 Vasco da Gama, with three ships, left Portugal amid the prayers and tears of his friends and well-wishers, resolved to pass Africa and to reach some port in Asia. For two years nothing was heard of him ; then his ships came back to Portugal again and he told the king that they had rounded Africa, picked up an Arab pilot on the eastern coast and sailed across the Indian Ocean to the port of Calicut in India itself.* What rejoicing there was at this news ! The sea-route had been found ; and the glory of the discovery and the rich trade with the East surely belonged to the little kingdom of Portugal.

Meanwhile another daring sailor had tried a still more dangerous route. Christopher Columbus, flying the flag of Spain, carrying with him a letter from the Spanish king to the Grand Khan of Cathay, had sailed westward across the Atlantic. He believed that, since the earth was round, the eastern coast of China could not be very far from the western coast of Europe. And sure enough, just when he expected it, they came in sight of land, beautiful islands set in a calm blue sea. Columbus thought that those islands were off the coast of Asia and he always believed that he had found the way to the East. But he had done something far more important, as you know ; for the land that he sighted was not Asia, but America, and a new world was found.

Thirty years after Columbus's first voyage, Magellan, sailing for Spain, did the most surprising thing of all, for one of his five ships sailed all around the world for the first time in history. The other ships, and Magellan himself, were lost in the long, dangerous journey. These were romantic days, and

* Look at the map between pages 147 and 148.

the men who came back from these great voyages had things to tell that sounded like fairy-tales come true. At last the way was open between all the countries in the world and nothing could separate them from each other again.

Since Spain and Portugal had made all these discoveries, they divided the new worlds between them. Spain claimed the right to America, while all the trade of the Indian Ocean was taken over by Portugal.

It was not only for trade and for wealth that these men risked their lives on dangerous seas and in strange lands. They truly believed that Christianity was the one true religion and that the world could be saved from sin and suffering only through Christ. They wanted to teach this faith to all people. They also wanted to know about the world and about the other countries in it, for the people of Europe are curious and active, and are always eager to know and to do new things. Besides this, they hated the Mohammedans. The Turks, you remember, had conquered Constantinople and Greece and had blocked the trade routes. The Christians, by reaching the East, hoped to take from their enemies the wealth and the power that they had in that part of the world.

The Portuguese met the Mohammedans as soon as their sails were seen on the Indian Ocean. The Arabs had carried the silks and the spices of the East in their ships for hundreds of years. Chinese vessels did not sail very often to the Persian Gulf; they took their wares to Malacca or Ceylon, and sold them to the Arabs, who carried them the rest of the way. And many Arab vessels, as you know, sailed to the Chinese ports and loaded there. Just as the Parthians, during the Han Dynasty, carried Chinese goods to Roman Syria, so, ever since the Tang Dynasty, the Arabs had carried them by sea, to the ports of western Asia. The Arabs did not want to lose this.

profitable business and they watched the Portuguese with fear and hatred. They put difficulties in their way, they tricked and killed them when they could. But the Portuguese were too strong for them.

Fleet after fleet made the dangerous voyage to the East and finally met the Arabs in battle. The Portuguese won, and made themselves masters of the Indian Ocean. To make their trade safer, they conquered certain important places : Socotra, at the mouth of the Red Sea, Hormuz at the mouth of the Persian Gulf, Goa on the western coast of India, and Malacca on the Malay Peninsula. If you look at those places on the map* you will see how anyone who held them could control the sea routes from the East Indies to Africa. A Portuguese viceroy lived in Goa and ruled a sea-empire, and the king of Portugal called himself, "Lord of the conquest, navigation and commerce of India, Ethiopia, Arabia and Persia." After Malacca was conquered, ships were sent out to explore farther east, to China and Japan.



WHAT did the Black-haired People know about all these amazing deeds? Nothing at all. They were not at all interested in other countries, and they had no desire to leave the Flowery Land. They were just as contented as the Europeans were curious. They had been busy with Tartar wars, and were not sending many ships to foreign lands. Their vast, rich country

* Look at the map between pages 147 and 148.

gave them everything they needed and many luxuries besides. If they wanted spices and fragrant woods from the southern islands, these were brought to their ports by willing merchants. They did not need to bestir themselves to trade. The things that they produced were so much more precious than the wares of other lands that foreign ships crowded their harbors, bringing the best that they had to barter, or buying the Chinese wares for gold and silver. "All that is under Heaven" was theirs. Was that not enough ?

Therefore the citizens of Canton were much surprised when, in 1516, a strange ship sailed up the river, frightening them by firing its guns in salute. Its shape was queer and its sails were different ; it bore an unknown flag. It was a Portuguese vessel, on an exploring tour ; the first European ship that ever entered a Chinese port. As the strangers landed, there were crowds of people on the wharves, who stared at them and chattered to each other. "What queer tight clothes !" they said. "How uncomfortable they must be ! Look at their eyes ! They are wide open like cat's eyes and sunk deep in their heads. And what noses !" They laughed and shouted to each other. "They stick out of their faces like the spouts of teapots, or like bird's beaks. Are these men or devils ?" The noses of the Chinese are small and much flatter at the bridge than western noses ; and their upper eyelid is different from ours, so that their eyes do not open quite as wide as ours do. So the Portuguese captain and his men looked very queer indeed to them and they crowded so close that the strangers could hardly make their way to the customs house.

They traded their cargo of pepper and other spices quietly, and sailed away, and their white sails vanished over the horizon. The people of Canton talked and wondered about them for a few days and then forgot them. But from the time when

that ship came up the river to Canton the history and the life of the Middle Kingdom was joined to the life and history of Europe, and the men from the West could not be forgotten for very long.

The next year a fleet of eight ships came to the mouth of the river that leads to Canton. Chinese vessels went out to meet them, and two of the Portuguese ships were allowed to sail up to the city. Their captain was a courteous gentleman; he brought a letter from the King of Portugal to the Emperor and he asked for the privilege of trading with China. His politeness and fairness pleased the Chinese officials; they agreed to trade with Portugal, but said that of course the Emperor must give his consent. So the envoy who carried the King's letter stayed ashore, to make the long journey to Peking and the captain sailed back to Malacca, feeling that all was well. Before he went, he asked whether any of his men had done anything wrong while they had been in port, and offered to pay any money that they might owe.

It took a long time for the Portuguese envoy to reach Peking, and during that time two unfortunate things happened. A brother of the very captain whom the Chinese had liked so much, anchored his ships by a little island near Canton. He built a fort there, and then he robbed Chinese vessels like any pirate, and sent his men ashore to kidnap women and children into slavery. He behaved so proudly and cruelly that the Chinese rose up against him and drove his ships out to sea, nearly destroying them all.

At the same time an Arab merchant came to China from Malacca. He had much to say and was allowed to see the Emperor. "Sire," he said, "do not trust these Franks. They come with fair words, asking to trade. Then they ask for a place in which to store their goods, and they build a fort there

to protect those goods. But they do not want to trade ; they want to conquer. If you let them set foot in your country they will try to conquer it." The Emperor was alarmed and angered by these events ; he refused to see the Portuguese envoy and sent him back to Canton, where he and his companions were thrown into prison and died.

Nevertheless, other traders came here and there along the coast, for China was like a honey-pot and the merchants were like bees buzzing around it. They traded with ports along the coasts of Fukien and started small colonies there, as the Arabs had done for hundreds of years. But many of these sailors and merchants were coarse and greedy men ; they were far from home and they did what they pleased. They robbed and killed and kidnapped, and broke open graves to steal the jewels of the dead. And again the Chinese rose up in fury against them, killed hundreds of them and burned their ships, shouting, "Foreign devils ! Foreign devils !"

But, since they still came and since, after all, the Chinese made money, too, from the trade, they were finally allowed to rent the rocky end of a little peninsula called Macao, and to come to Canton at certain intervals to buy and to sell. They must not even spend a night on shore, however, but must sleep on their ships and leave just as soon as their business was done. The Chinese hated them and distrusted them. They called them the "Red Barbarians," and did not want them in the country.

But, remember, it was not only merchants who went out to America and Asia. There were also the men who wanted to teach Christianity and who are called missionaries. In Kublai Khan's time, the monks of St. Francis were the first to travel into Asia ; during the Ming dynasty, the merchants came first, but the missionaries came very shortly after them.

Jesuit priests came to live in Macao, hoping for a chance to go into China and to persuade the Chinese to become Christians.

These Jesuits were Roman Catholics and belonged to the Society of Jesus, which had just been founded by St. Ignatius. They were filled with new faith and power, and were eager for work. They were scholars, for they believed that people's minds, as well as their hearts, should be convinced of the love of God. They were experts in mathematics and science and philosophy. They were the very men to send to the Chinese, who loved learning and who admired scholars far more than they did warriors.

As soon as they arrived in Macao, they started to learn the Chinese language, and soon knew how to speak and to write it; they studied the Classics, and found out all they could about the manners and the customs of the people. When the merchants went to Canton to trade, the priests went with them, carrying Chinese books in their hands, and when the officials of the port saw them reading these books, they spoke to them and found them interesting and agreeable. They asked the missionaries to spend the night on shore, instead of going back to the ships, as the merchants had to do; they took them to their houses and talked with them far into the night.

Shortly afterwards two of the priests were invited to live in one of the southern cities. They wore the dress of Chinese scholars and had long talks with the learned men of that city. The Chinese had never studied science very deeply. Perhaps it was because of their religion; if you believe that everything is alive, that mountains and rivers, earth and sky, are spirits, then you do not dig too deep into the earth or peer too closely at the stars, for fear of making them angry. Perhaps it was because, in their schools, nothing was taught but the Classics.

At all events, even in those days, when people knew only a fraction of the science that they know now, the Jesuits had much to tell the Chinese. They made maps which showed that the earth was round, and not square, as the Chinese thought it was. They taught physics and mathematics and geometry, and showed the practical use of these things, in surveying land and measuring heights, in the study of the stars and many other things. The Chinese were delighted and became eager students.

They also had watches, and clocks that struck the hours. Here, again, was something new, for the Black-haired People, with all their skill, had never done much with machinery. These clocks that ticked off the seconds and struck the hours all by themselves, without being touched by any human hand, fascinated them. It was largely because of a clock that the Jesuits finally reached Peking and saw the Emperor himself.

The life of the missionaries was not always easy. They had trouble with some of the Chinese officials, or mandarins. Mandarin is a word that the Portuguese made; it means any official of the Chinese Empire, from an inspector of customs to a Prime Minister, and is such a useful word that we shall use it after this. The mandarin of one city would treat them very politely, while another would order them to go back to Macao at once. Mobs attacked their house and threatened to kill them more than once, and they suffered many hardships in traveling. They behaved with dignity and patience, however, no matter what happened, and so they won everyone's respect.

For they did not forget the real purpose that had brought them there; they taught Christianity everywhere they went, and tried to live it also, which is more important. They were wise enough to see the truth and the beauty of the Chinese

Classics. "Your ancient wise men taught you the truth," said Father Ricci, as he talked with mandarins and scholars. "God, whom you call Tien, spoke to Confucius and to Mencius and to your early kings. We have not come to deny anything that they have said, but we have come to tell you something more, a greater truth that God has given to the world." Several people became Christians in each place where they lived and they made many good friends. At last, through one of these friends, they were able to go to Peking.



They took fine presents with them, for they knew that wherever one went in China, one must have gifts to offer. There was a handsome French clock and a spinet and other products of the west. They were delayed for months on their journey and might never have reached the capital, but a list of these presents had been sent to the Emperor and he was so curious to see the clock that he finally ordered the missionaries to come to Peking. He was delighted with the gifts

and in return invited Ricci and his companion to live in Peking, giving him an allowance of money and food from the royal treasury.

The good fathers rejoiced at the wonderful chance that was given to them ; they persuaded members of the imperial family and of the Han Lin Academy to become Christians, and had a flourishing little church within the very walls of the Forbidden City. So the Jesuits, by politeness and wisdom and patience, won their way into the heart of China, while the merchants had to wait outside.

Other fine men came after Ricci had died, and by the middle of the seventeenth century, a Jesuit father was president of the Board of Mathematics and Astronomy, which was a very high position, for he had charge of the making of the calendar, the forecasting of eclipses and the study of the stars. These are very important in the life and ceremony of China. The priests wrote many books in Chinese on religion and science, they made maps of the country, corrected the calendar, and cast cannon to help the Emperor in a war against the Tartars. Besides this, they were immensely interested in everything Chinese, and wrote long, long letters back to Europe about the literature, the laws and the customs of the country, and detailed descriptions of the land and the people. They began to translate Chinese books into European languages. They made the East and the West acquainted with each other and were very useful interpreters between those two great parts of the world. And interpreters were going to be needed very soon.

Other European countries besides Spain and Portugal were longing for the riches of the East. The nations of Europe had been growing up while China was in its prime. Portugal and Spain, France and England, Holland and Russia, had come

of age, as you might say, during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. They had freed themselves from their enemies and they had firm governments. They were nations, not just groups of people quarreling with each other. They were like strong young men eager to make their fortunes. And behold, on each side of them were two newly-found continents, America in the west and Asia in the east : America, less civilized than they were, covered with forest and prairie, rich in mines of gold and silver ; Asia, more civilized than they, filled with fine cities, and rich with the piled-up treasures of long centuries. Many adventurous men went out from Europe to one of these two continents. They came to Asia to trade, but they soon found that they were stronger than the people of Asia. They had learned the use of gunpowder from the Mongols, and had invented guns and cannons that made them more powerful in war than any other people. They found that, instead of buying the things that they wanted, they could own them by conquest. What the Arab merchant told the Chinese Emperor turned out to be absolutely true.

By the middle of the seventeenth century (about 1650) Holland had begun to conquer the great islands of the East Indies, Java and Sumatra and the Moluccas, England and France were establishing themselves in India, Spain owned the Philippine Islands and Russia was moving into Siberia, that immense land that stretches, north of Mongolia and Manchuria, from Europe to the Sea of Okhotsk. China was nearly surrounded by these powerful and greedy nations. Beware, O Flowery Land ! For these people are more dangerous than any Tartars, even the Mongols. For Tartar empires rise and fall, but these people hold what they take ; Tartars learn the civilization of the people they conquer, but these people have a civilization of their own and they force it on everyone whom they meet.

WE, WHO can look back at history, know how important the coming of the Europeans was to China, but at the time no one knew it. The few Jesuits at the court, the few Portuguese merchants at Canton made no great difference in the life of the Black-haired People. Besides, they had other things to think about. The Ming Dynasty was coming to an end, and a powerful tribe of Tartars was attacking the northern provinces.

There were three great dangers, you remember, that beset any dynasty : one was Tartar invasion, another was rebellion in the provinces, and the third was corruption in the palace. Of these three, the last was the worst. If the Emperor gave himself up to luxury and pleasure and gave his power into the hands of unworthy men, the whole plan of government fell to pieces, for the government was centered in the throne and depended on the watchfulness and devotion of the Emperor. If he yielded to the temptations of his palace, the other two dangers always followed, for the provinces were sure to rebel and the Tartars were sure to raid the borders when the government was weak or in disorder. This had been true from the very beginning of history and it was true now. The last Ming Emperors were ruled by women and eunuchs, and the usual misfortunes followed.

The Forbidden City, as the palace was called, was a splendid place. Its stately halls of audience and of ceremony stood in the midst of vast paved courtyards. Scarlet pillars held up the roofs of golden-yellow tiles ; the walls were also red and the beams and eaves were richly carved and painted. Steps and balustrades of white marble led from the courtyards up to each hall, and fierce stone lions stood below the steps. Behind the halls of government stood the Emperor's Palace of Cloudless Heaven ; behind that was the Empress's Palace of Earthly

Peace. Around these were many other houses and courtyards and gardens, for the palace was indeed a city and in it lived the Emperor's family, his hundreds of concubines, and his thousands of eunuchs.

Outside the walls of the Forbidden City were three lakes, bordered with pleasure palaces and pavilions: "The Pavilion of the Far Sail," "The Pavilion of Welcoming Fragrance," "The House of Secret Thoughts," and countless others. It was very easy to be tempted by the beauty and the luxury of these into a life of idleness and indulgence and to let one's ministers and mandarins run the empire. To go boating in the morning, to eat and drink very often in the lovely pavilions, to watch the actors in their flashing costumes act play after play all afternoon, to be entertained by music and dancing in the evening—all this was very pleasant. And the eunuchs of the palace tried to make it just as pleasant as possible, so that the Emperor would never want to go outside the walls of the Forbidden City, and would not want to be disturbed in his pleasures by affairs of state. Then they could manage things as they pleased.

These eunuchs were the attendants of the Emperor and of the women of the palace, as you know. They were not educated, and were often mean and wicked men, but because of their intimacy with the Emperor and his family, they gained an importance that they did not deserve. Toward the end of the Ming Dynasty they became very powerful. When a capable young Emperor came to the throne, they poisoned him, and put his son, a weak boy of fifteen, in his place. This boy, whose health had always been delicate, was completely in the power of two very bad people, his nurse and a eunuch named Wei.

The young Emperor loved carpentry, so a beautiful shop

was made for him in the palace grounds and there he spent most of his time. When he was busy with his saw or his hammer, Wei would come in with an important state paper in his hand and begin to talk about it. The Emperor did not want to be bothered. "Do as you like about it," he would say, and Wei would write down what he wanted done and have his master sign it. He did not let anyone come near the Emperor, but carried the ministers' messages to him and his answers back to the ministers. Any man who wanted a position in the government, had to pay the eunuch a goodly sum for it, for the Emperor appointed whomever Wei recommended. If any one protested against this shameful state of affairs he was sure to die in a very short time. Temples were actually built in honor of Wei, and people were supposed to worship him as if he had been a saint.

The most dangerous thing that Wei did was to meddle with the army. The Manchu Tartars, in the northeast, had been waging war on China for several years. The Chinese army was much larger than the Manchu, and fine generals were in command of it. It would have been no harder to drive back the Manchus than it was to defeat the Mongols, who had also attacked the borders in the earlier days of the dynasty. Besides, the Chinese had guns and good cannon, made with the help of the Jesuit priests, while the Manchus still used crossbows and catapults. But the busybodies in the palace, "the rats and the foxes" as they were called, wanted to run the army. If a general would not pay them, or do as they said, they had him removed, and a worthless man, who paid them a large sum of money, put in his place. In fact, a large part of the Chinese army was commanded by eunuchs, who knew nothing at all about war and were usually

cowards. The Empire was defenseless, like a house with all its doors wide open, and no one to guard it.

In the palace there was only one person who was good and true, and this was the Empress. Her story is interesting. When she was a tiny girl, she had been found on the roadside by a scholar, who took pity on her and adopted her as his own daughter. He educated her carefully and found that she had a fine mind and a true and gentle heart. She was called Precious Pearl. When she was about fifteen the Emperor sent word through all the country that he wished to choose a wife and that all pretty and well-educated maidens should come to the palace. Precious Pearl went with thousands of others. Many of them were sent back home at once, but hundreds remained. The beauty, character, intelligence and conduct of these hundreds were examined carefully and finally three were chosen from them all. These three were taken into the presence of the Emperor and he chose Precious Pearl from among them. So the little waif of the roadside was made Empress of All that is under Heaven and came to live in the Palace of Earthly Peace. Her kind foster father was given an honorable title and position in Peking.

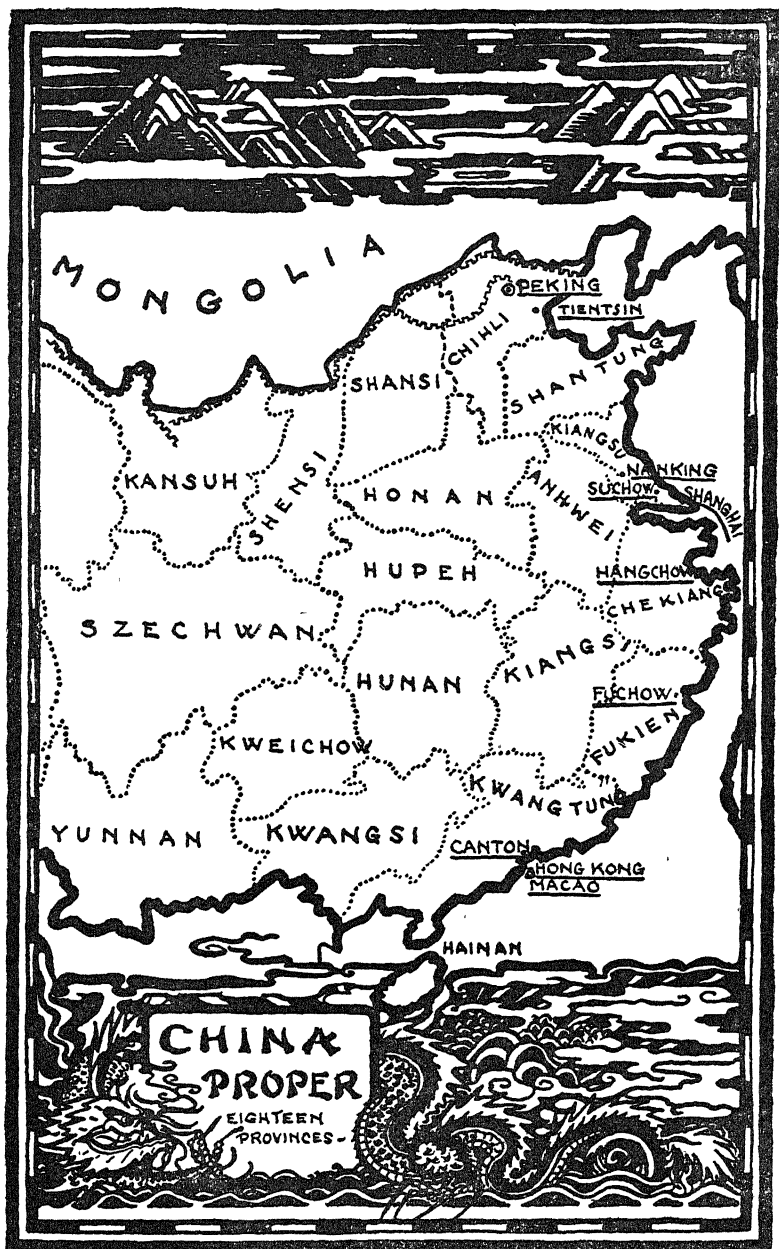
Precious Pearl saw the wickedness of the eunuchs, but she could do very little. She urged her husband to see his ministers, to study the Classics, and to leave his pleasures, but although he listened to her, because he truly loved her, he did not change very much. Because of his love for her the eunuchs did not dare to kill her, but they tried to frighten her into doing what they wanted and they had her father sent back to his home in disgrace. It is hard to believe that such poor creatures as they were could have so much power. The life of Precious Pearl was filled with sadness and anxiety, but

she was always patient and gentle, and spent much time in prayer before the shrine of the Goddess of Mercy.

One thing she was able to do. The Emperor died while he was still very young, and Wei had planned that a baby son of his should succeed him, because then Wei would keep the power in his own hands. He tried to get the Empress to agree to this, but she knew that the only hope of the Empire was in the Emperor's brother, who was an honest and well-meaning prince. "I have been ready for death for many years," she said to Wei, "if I obey you now, you will kill me sooner or later, and if I refuse to obey you, you will only kill me a little sooner. But if I die resisting you to my utmost, I can face unashamed the spirits of the Emperors in the other world." She earnestly begged the Emperor to appoint his brother as his heir and she did not leave him until he had done it. "Take care of the Empress," he said to his brother, with his dying breath, "she has been a faithful wife and I owe much to her. And you can trust Wei with the highest office, for he has proved himself worthy of it." Alas, what a blind and foolish ruler! He could not see beyond the walls of his palace and did not know that he had given his country into the hands of its enemies.

The brother who succeeded him put an end to the rule of the nurse and the eunuch; he tried to bring order into the Empire, which was as disturbed as a stormy sea. But it was too late. Disaster was sweeping down upon the capital from two directions. In the west, in the province of Shensi, a great rebellion had arisen, led by a cruel and powerful man named Li. Another rebellion was raging in Szechuan. And from the northeast the Manchu Tartars, with a strong and disciplined army, were marching toward Peking.

Li reached the capital first. He had marched through th



northern provinces, plundering and killing and destroying like a Mongol. If a city opened its gates to him at once, he did not harm it, but if it held out against him, even for a week, he slaughtered the inhabitants and burned the city to the ground. He was at the head of an army of merciless robbers, well trained and disciplined. As they drew near to Peking, the way was open to them ; the main part of the army, under the only good general who was left, was fighting the Manchus. The soldiers that were left were commanded by eunuchs, and most of these surrendered the cities that they were supposed to defend. The great capital, whose strong walls could have been held against any enemy, was terror-struck. A eunuch opened one of the gates, and Li's army came into the Outer City, plundering and burning as usual.

The helpless Emperor went to a hill outside the Forbidden City ; it was night, and on every side he saw the blaze of burning houses, and heard the distant shouts of the rebels. Early next morning he went into the*audience hall to await his ministers, who had been summoned to see him, but no one came. There was silence in the wide courtyards and silence in the frightened city. The Emperor took off his robes of state and put on some poor and ragged clothes ; then he went again to the hill outside the palace and hanged himself to a tree.

Li proclaimed himself Emperor and came with his rebel chiefs into the red and golden palaces of the Forbidden City. But unexpected things happened. General Wu, the one good leader left in the Chinese army, was in the north fighting the Manchus. Horrified at the capture of Peking and the death of the Emperor, knowing that he alone could not drive Li out, he suddenly turned and asked his enemies for help. He

asked the Manchu chief to join him in driving the rebels out of Peking.

The Tartars were delighted ; it seemed too good to be true that they were being invited to enter the Empire and the city that they had fought against so long. With Wu they marched rapidly toward Peking. Li was beaten ; his men took everything valuable that they could lay their hands on, and fled, streaming back toward Shensi, whence they had come. They fired the city as they left ; thousands of houses burned, and the great yellow roofs of the imperial palaces crashed to the ground with a sound like thunder.

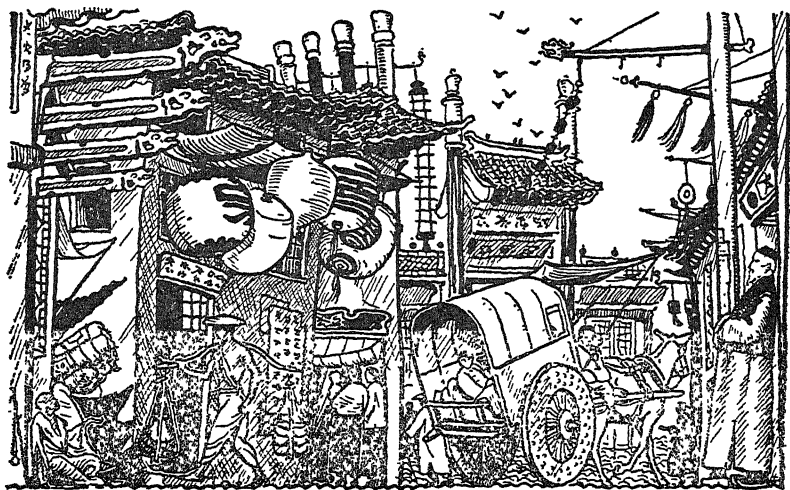
Into this terrified, plundered, burning city the Manchus, cool, disciplined and resolute, rode beside General Wu. He thanked them and suggested that their work was done and that they might return to their home, but of course they did not go. They proclaimed their chief the Emperor of China ; they called their dynasty the Ta Ching, or the Great Pure Dynasty ; they took over the government as quietly and capably as if they had lived in the Middle Kingdom all their lives. They made General Wu a prince and treated him with great honor.

If the fall of a dynasty meant only the death of one family, and the passing of the government from weak hands into strong ones, it would not be a matter of very great importance. Unfortunately it meant, too, the death and terrible suffering of millions of innocent people. Thousands of patient farmers saw their carefully tilled fields ruined and their villages laid waste by passing armies, thousands starved to death as their harvests were destroyed. Thousands of peaceful citizens died by the sword or in the flames of their burning cities, after their homes had been brutally sacked by rebel soldiers. They

say that in Szechuan alone, at this time, over a million people were slain. The Chinese love peace, it is true ; yet we shall not have a true picture of their history if we forget these terrible disasters that came to some part of the Empire with every rebellion, with every Tartar war, and with every change of dynasty. Over and over again the soil of China has been drenched with the blood of its people.

A dynasty lasted about three hundred years, and then went down in ruin and rebellion. So it had always been, and so again in 1644, the Ming Dynasty went down in blood and fire, and out of fire and blood the Manchu Dynasty arose.





CHAPTER 16

THE CHING DYNASTY [1644-1912]

THE MANCHU TARTARS had conquered the Middle Kingdom in a most surprising and easy way, but it was not such a great misfortune as it seems. Fifty years before this time, the Manchus had been a rather unimportant little horde, living in a fertile valley in Manchuria. The father and grandfather of one of their leaders had been treacherously killed by the Chinese, and that leader vowed vengeance on the Chinese and kept his vow. He had other grievances beside this and when he made war upon China he wrote down all his reasons for doing so, ending with the words, "Therefore I hate you with an intense hatred and now make war against you." A copy of this letter he burned and sent into the spirit-world, so that Heaven and Earth should also know of his hate.

From this time on, the Manchus seem to have taken it for granted that some day they would conquer China, although it seemed an impossible thing to do. They copied all the Chinese ways; their leader took the title of Emperor and had

his six boards of government, like the Chinese. They started schools and gave literary examinations to all their mandarins. They used the same official ranks as the Chinese did. They did all this long before 1644, and so, when they were invited into China, and the gates of Peking were opened to them, they knew just what to do, and took over the government of the great Empire as easily as if they had been Chinese. At that time their energy and hardy strength was just what the Empire seemed to need, and the Manchu Dynasty brought power and glory to China and peace and order to its people.

The Ching Dynasty, as it is usually called, is famous for the reigns of two splendid Emperors. Their names are Kang Hi and Kien Lung and each of them reigned for sixty prosperous and glorious years. The first Ching Emperor died very young and as he lay on his death bed the thought of the great Empire, still in disorder, made him very anxious. His sons were only boys. He called them to him and said to them, "Which of you feels able to bear the burden of a newly-conquered empire?" The eldest murmured that he was unworthy of such a great task, the second was silent, but the third, a boy eight years old, knelt beside his father's bed and said earnestly, "O Father, I feel able to do it." The Emperor had already noticed this boy's extraordinary mind and character and so he made him his heir and left him in the care of four ministers who were to rule for him until he was old enough to do it himself. When he became Emperor he was known as Kang Hi, which means "Lasting Peace."

When he was fourteen, one of the four ministers died. Another of these four had become very proud and had done some very unjust things, so Kang Hi, at fourteen, thought that it was time to take things into his own hands. He told his ministers that he himself would rule henceforth, and his

first act as Emperor was to put to death the man who had been unjust. From that time on he ruled the Empire wisely and strongly, meeting his ministers at cock-crow every morning, as an Emperor should, dealing with every problem that arose, from Mongolia to the tropical forests of Yunnan. He divided his days between studies and exercise, and was equally good at both. He became a skillful archer and a fine horseman and he loved hunting all his life. He was also an excellent scholar, knew the Classics well and studied geometry, mathematics and physics with the Dutch Jesuit, Father Verbiest. Indeed, since the days of Tai Tsung, China had not had such a ruler as Kang Hi.

When he wanted to be sure of the loyalty of the Mongol tribes, he himself journeyed into Mongolia, beyond the imperial hunting-park at Jehol, and asked them to meet him there. He took all his court with him, Chinese and Manchus both, and set up a great circular encampment, with his own yellow linen tent in the center. There, in his dragon-embroidered robes of yellow and purple satin, he received the homage of the Tartar chiefs, and afterwards he feasted them, and gave them the entertainment that they loved. There were horse races and archery contests, wrestling matches and fancy riding, for Tartars live on horseback, as you know, and can ride standing on their heads or on their feet, and know all sorts of tricks, just as American cowboys do. They loved to show their skill before the Son of Heaven and when they went back to their wind-swept plains they were his devoted subjects, ready to die for him.

When a powerful Tartar chief attacked these same Mongols and invaded their territory, Kang Hi himself led one part of the great army that went out to restore peace. Before he went, he offered a sacrifice on the great open Altar of Heaven, out-

side the southern gate of Peking. After burning a young bull, with music and ceremony, after kotowing and offering food and incense, the Emperor prayed, "O sovereign Heaven, O supreme Ruler, with trust and reverence I ask Your help in the war that I must undertake. I have made one vow, to bestow the blessings of peace throughout the vast territory over which You have placed me. But this Tartar chief destroys my hopes ; he sows disorder everywhere and tramples Your laws underfoot. I hold from You the right to make war upon the wicked ; I implore Your support and offer up this sacrifice."

He went to the ancestral temple which his family had built within the Forbidden City and knelt before the tablets of his ancestors, telling them what he planned to do. Then, after reviewing his soldiers, and honoring each of his generals with a cup of wine from his own hands, he set forth with the army, crossing the Gobi Desert, sharing the cold and the hardships of that terrible journey with his men. Chinese soldiers have never been beaten under such a leader as this, and the Tartar chief was driven back again and again, until he killed himself.

Manchuria had become a part of the Empire when the Manchus conquered China, for they had already brought the different hordes of Tartars who lived there under their rule. It was a valuable territory, with good farming land and splendid forests and plenty of rivers. Now the whole of Mongolia, too, belonged to China, and all its chiefs paid homage and tribute to the Son of Heaven. When these outer lands were obedient and at peace, there was no danger of invasion and the northern provinces could live in safety, free from the ancient fear of Tartar raids.

Kang Hi was as able to take care of China itself as he was of the outer territories. A serious rebellion in the southern

provinces, led by the same General Wu who had invited the Manchus into China, was put down and order was restored. The big island of Formosa was taken from a family of pirates who had ruled it for a long time. Justice was done in every province, for Kang Hi watched the mandarins carefully and punished anyone who cheated or oppressed the people. He traveled through the Empire, climbed the Tai Shan as Shun had done, and worshipped there, kotowed before the tomb of Confucius at Shantung, and visited the south. And, whenever he could, he went on hunting trips in the wild country north of Peking, tiring out six or seven horses a day, and tiring out, you may be sure, some of the less active members of his court. Wherever he went, he talked freely and pleasantly with both mandarins and peasants, and knew what was going on everywhere.

They say that one day when he was hunting he heard the sound of weeping, and found an old farmer sitting by the side of a road. "What is causing you so much sorrow?" asked the Emperor, who was dressed in a rough hunting coat and so was not recognized by the old man. "Alas," was the reply, "all my life I have lived on the little farm that my ancestors left to me, and my son worked with me to raise our food. But the mandarin of this district liked my land and took it from me and took my son to be his servant. And I am left homeless and alone." The Emperor dismounted. "Get on my horse, good grandfather," said he, "and you and I will go to this mandarin and make him give back your land." The farmer saw that this friendly man was someone of importance, and he refused to mount his horse, so the Emperor took him up behind his saddle and they both rode off to the mandarin's house. There Kang Hi opened his coat, showed the dragon-embroidered robe he wore beneath it and the guilty mandarin

fell on his face and knocked his head against the ground. The Emperor had no mercy on him, however, but ordered him to be beheaded at once and the old man got back his farm and his son. How different was Kang Hi from the later Ming Emperors who never went beyond the palace gates and who allowed mandarins and eunuchs to do anything they pleased !

One of Kang Hi's greatest joys was to study and to talk with the scholars at his court. He had a great dictionary made, of over 80,000 characters, which is still the standard dictionary of China, and the members of the Han Lin Academy made an encyclopedia of hundreds of volumes, containing all the knowledge of past and present ages. Kang Hi himself was a writer and a poet ; when he was still a boy he wrote sixteen rules of living, something like those of the first Ming Emperor. They were read aloud in every district of China on the first and the fifteenth of every month for hundreds of years. He enjoyed the company of the Jesuit priests and learned much from them.

The Jesuits had seen the fall of the Ming Dynasty and the coming of the Manchus, they had lived through the burning of Peking, and they remained at court, as many other mandarins had done. The first Ching Emperor had liked them and left them at their work on the Board of Astronomy ; he had even sent his sons to them to be taught. But some of the other scholars and mandarins were jealous of these foreigners, because of their knowledge and because of the high positions that had been given to them. When the first Emperor died and while Kang Hi was still very young, these scholars had the Jesuits dismissed from their high posts and thrown into prison, or sent out of the country. An Arab scholar was made the President of the Board of Astronomy. When Kang Hi was about fifteen, he was told that the calendar that this Arab had made was quite wrong. "Who can correct it ?" asked the

young Emperor. "The barbarian priests know more about astronomy than any other men," answered one of his ministers. "Then let them and the Board of Astronomers meet me today in the Hall of Audience," said Kang Hi.

When they were all there, Kang Hi asked the Jesuits whether they could make a correct calendar, and one of them, who was an excellent mathematician, said that he could. "What proof can you give us of your ability?" asked the Emperor. "If your Majesty will place a rod upright upon a table, where it will receive the full light of the sun, I will tell your Majesty exactly where the shadow of that rod will fall tomorrow at noon," answered the priest. The Emperor and his ministers thought that was a fair test, and they set up the rod as the priest requested. Kang Hi asked the Arab astronomer whether he, too, could mark the place where the shadow would fall and he had to confess that he could not. So the Jesuit made all his calculations and drew a line with his pencil on the board into which the rod had been set.

Next day at noon the Board of Astronomy and some of the highest ministers assembled in the court to see the result of the experiment. It was in the middle of winter, and the mandarins' long silk robes were lined and trimmed with fur and their hands were thrust into their warm sleeves. They wore round hats on the top of which was a jeweled knob that showed the rank of each one; at the back of many of the hats hung a short peacock's feather, which was a mark of high honor, and their hair hung down their backs in a long queue, or braid. The Jesuits wore the dark robes of scholars and their hair, too, hung down their backs in a queue. Behind them all, the scarlet pillars and golden roofs of the palaces gleamed in the wintry sun. They watched the shadow of the rod move very slowly across the board. It seemed very far

from the pencil mark and some of the mandarins smiled a little sneeringly at each other.

But at noon the edge of the shadow slid exactly into the place which had been marked for it, and the mandarins, looking over one another's shoulders, exclaimed in astonishment and admiration, and, with the generosity of true scholars, turned and congratulated the Jesuit on his knowledge and his skill. He was made President of the Board of Astronomy in place of the Arab, and he quickly corrected the mistakes in the calendar and made out a true one.

Kang Hi brought back the missionaries who had been banished, and studied and talked with them. He particularly enjoyed geometry and kept them busy providing him with new problems and correcting those which he had worked out. He loved to talk with them about Europe, and to listen to all that they could tell him about their own countries. There was a king in Europe who was ruling at just this time, whose reign was even longer than Kang Hi's; this was Louis XIV of France, and Kang Hi, through the French missionaries, kept in touch with all that the king was doing. He asked them to translate into Chinese any important books on science that might be written in Europe. The Jesuits, on the other hand, translated Chinese books into French, wrote a long and delightful history of China and sent volumes of letters back to their friends at home. Europe, and France especially, became very much interested in China, and had the greatest admiration for its philosophy and its just and noble ideas of government.

The Russians had been pushing farther and farther into Siberia and it was necessary to mark a boundary between Siberia and the Chinese territories of Mongolia and Manchuria. Kang Hi sent two of his chief ministers, with an escort of

soldiers and a great caravan of camels and horses away up to the Amur River, to make a treaty. With this expedition traveled two Jesuit priests, for they could be interpreters between the Chinese and Russians. They knew Chinese very well, and both they and the Russians spoke Latin. This meeting was very successful, thanks to the wisdom of the two priests, and the boundary that China wanted was decided upon. This treaty was kept for nearly two hundred years and the Russians and the Chinese were very friendly. Another great king was reigning in Europe at this time, Peter the Great of Russia, and he wrote a letter to Kang Hi, signing himself, "Your Majesty's very good friend, Peter."

Since the Jesuit fathers had made themselves so useful, they were very well liked, and very little was said against the strange religion which they taught. In 1692 the Board of Ceremonies itself issued a decree allowing the Christian religion to be taught and churches to be built anywhere in the Empire. Hundreds of thousands of people became Roman Catholics, and churches, sometimes of Chinese architecture, sometimes of European, were built in the different provinces. Then a sad thing happened.

Father Ricci, you remember, who was the first of the Jesuit missionaries to come to China, believed that the Chinese word "Tien" meant "God"; he saw the beauty of the ancient religion and the truth that Confucius had taught. When any Chinese became Christians, he did not stop them from sacrificing to their ancestors or to Confucius. But priests of other orders of the Catholic Church thought that when people became Christians they ought to give up everything in their old religion and worship only the saints of the Christian Church. They had not lived in China as long as the Jesuits had and did not know its people so well. They said that the

Chinese knew nothing about God, but that "Tien" just meant the sky. Did Kang Hi pray to the sky when he went to fight the Tartars ?

The Jesuits knew that if they forbade the Christians to worship their ancestors and Confucius, all their work in China would be lost, for the Hundred Families had honored their ancestors since the beginning of history, and Confucius had been their teacher and their guide for thousands of years. The Jesuits could not see anything wrong in the worship paid to them. So the priests of the different orders began to dispute and to quarrel about this.

Finally the question was brought before the Pope, who was the head of the Catholic Church. It was hard for him to judge, because he lived so far away from China, but he finally decided that no Christian must worship his ancestors or sacrifice to Confucius. The Jesuits were heartbroken ; they saw the work and the devotion of a hundred years wiped out by that decision. Kang Hi was very angry when he heard what the Pope said. He was the high priest of his people, as you know ; he did not want another man to decide what his people should do or not do. "How can the Pope know about the ceremonies of China ?" he asked the missionaries. "Would I dare to judge the customs of Europe, when I know nothing about them ?" Besides, the Chinese dislike quarreling and disputing, and Kang Hi was disgusted with the long disagreement between the foreign priests. So he issued an edict banishing from China all missionaries except those who had special permission to stay. The few who were allowed to stay were the astronomers and scholars who were useful to the Emperor, and they were no longer allowed to teach their religion. The Christian Churches that had been built in various provinces were turned into schools and town halls and the Chinese who

had become Christians got on as best they could without their priests. The pleasant understanding that had existed between the Chinese and these Europeans came to an end, and that is a pity, for understanding between men of different races and countries is a rare and very valuable thing.

Now the long reign of Kang Hi finally came to an end, in 1722. The Empire had gained in territory, and was prosperous, united and at peace. When he had reigned for just sixty years, he invited all the old men of China who were over sixty years of age, to come and feast with him. Thousands came, and you may be sure that the feast was a gorgeous one; for Kang Hi in his private life lived very sensibly and ate and dressed very very simply, but when, as the ruler of "All that is under Heaven," he held his court or performed a ceremony, no king could outdo him in splendor.

The happy festival probably ended with a great display of fireworks, for the Chinese have always loved them and are very skillful in making them. They knew about gunpowder long before the Europeans did, but they used it for fireworks more than they did for weapons. They made giant crackers that went off with a fearful noise, rockets that burst into stars and fishes and flowers of colored light, dragons that writhed across the sky, trees of green fire with birds and butterflies flitting among their leaves and a thousand other things. Most of our fireworks are made in China, and the crackers that American children used to send off on the Fourth of July were always bright red because they were made in the Flowery Land, where red is the color of joy.



KANG HI'S GRANDSON, Kien Lung (which means "Enduring Glory"), also reigned for sixty years, from 1735-1795. Few dynasties can boast of two such rulers as these. Both of them were great warriors and yet both of them fought only when their territory or their vassals were attacked.

A nephew of the same Tartar chief whom Kang Hi had defeated, made trouble in the north and Kien Lung sent out armies again across the Gobi Desert. The rebel was overcome, and Kien Lung's armies marched on to Turkestan. That ancient land, through which the caravan routes had run for thousands of years, was regained and the little tribes of Mongols and Mohammedans who lived there were glad enough to have the protection of the Son of Heaven. So Turkestan was added to Manchuria and Mongolia and there was peace in those regions which had given so much trouble ever since the beginning of the history of Asia. It seemed as if the Manchu Tartars were the last of the warlike hordes that had flowed out of those northern plains for so long.

The Mongols, who had once been the terror of the world, had become Buddhists in the time of Kublai Khan, as you may remember. They had learned this religion from the priests in Tibet, who are called lamas, and it is a strange sort of Buddhism, which Buddha himself could hardly have recognized. The Tibetans, who live among the frozen peaks of the highest mountains in the world, close to the powerful and mysterious forces of nature, have always been great believers in magic and in good and evil spirits. They did not give up this belief when they became Buddhists, and most of them put more trust in charms and chanted prayers than they did in the wise and simple teaching of their master.

They had a very elaborate church, and at the head of it was

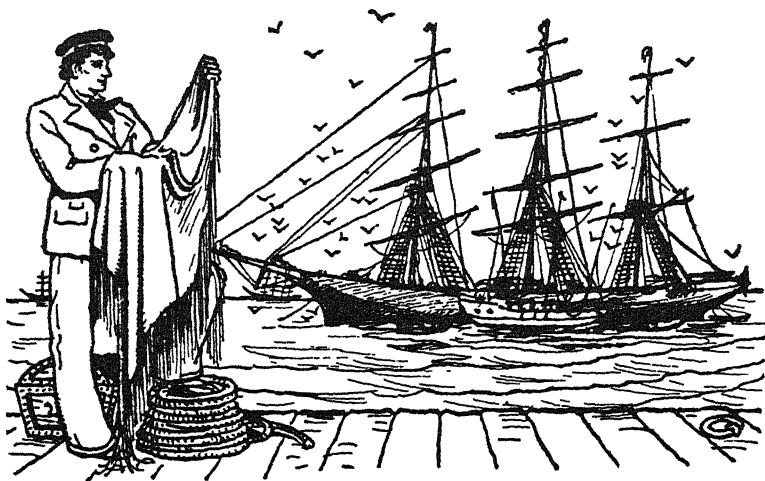
a priest called the Dalai Lama, who lived in the city of Lhasa, in one of the most beautiful buildings in the world. It is a steep, high palace, whose white walls slope back from the rocky hill to which they cling, and lift their flashing golden roofs into the sky.

This religion had changed the Mongols from a fierce and roving people into a much more peaceful one. They became very devout and at least one son, and sometimes more than one, in every family, became a monk. What a change this was for the descendants of Jenghis Khan! Monasteries, with high and sloping walls like those of Lhasa, were built in the hills and on the plains of Mongolia. Since the head of the church, the Dalai Lama, lived in Tibet, and the Mongols looked to him as their spiritual leader, any one who held Tibet held the allegiance of the Mongol hordes.

Therefore the Tartars who had fought against Kang Hi and Kien Lung, had also invaded Tibet, trying to conquer it and to keep the Mongols on their side. But the two great Emperors had been too strong for them. The same armies that crossed the Gobi Desert crossed the freezing mountain passes of Tibet and drove their enemies out. Garrisons of Manchu soldiers guarded the frontiers of the bleak Tibetan highlands and Chinese mandarins remained in Lhasa to watch over the government and to report to Peking when anything went wrong.

So Tibet, too, became a part of the Chinese Empire, and behold, the Middle Kingdom was surrounded, on the land, by vast territories of people who were its obedient vassals. For on the south, too, Burma, Siam, and Tonking paid tribute to China, even though they did not actually belong to the Empire. One of the great dangers, the danger of invasion

by land, was no longer to be feared. The Empire was larger and more powerful than ever, and although they were under Tartar rule, the Black-haired People were prosperous and at peace.

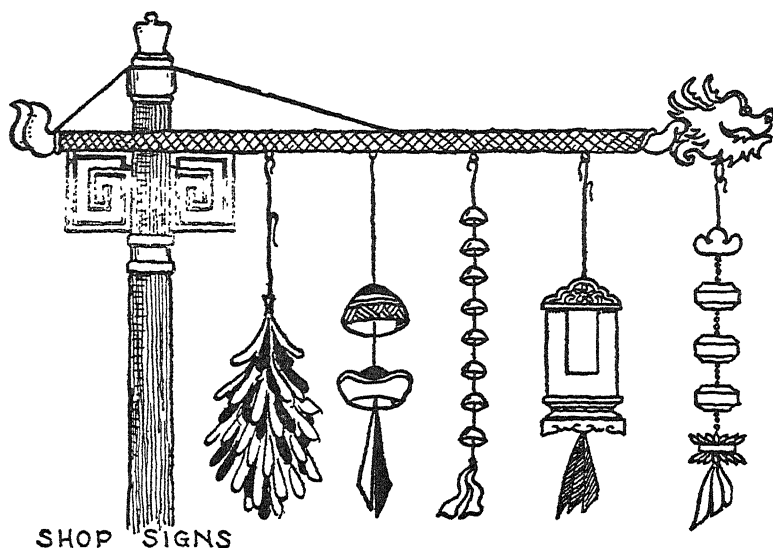


BUT WHAT of the new danger that had crept over the horizon of the western ocean? What of the foreign devils, the Europeans, whose manners and whose deeds were so barbarous that they could not be permitted even to enter the Flowery Land? In the old days, in the glorious times of Tang and Sung and Ming, the long sea coast of China had been safe; but now, since the western barbarians had filled the sky with sound of their cannon, and seized one place after another in their greed for trade, the ocean borders must be guarded as carefully as those of the land. For the Europeans were dangerous folk, who conquered anything that they could lay their hands on, and besides they were barbarians who did not understand the

Li, the laws and customs of China, and who might disturb its peace if they came too near.

Therefore foreign merchants were allowed to come only to one port, the port of Canton in the south of China. Very strict rules were made about their trading, and the rules were obeyed. Ships could no longer come and go as they pleased, or force their way up the river, firing their guns. They could not enter the city of Canton, but a row of buildings was put up for them, by the river, outside the gates, and there they must live and do all their business and go away as quickly as possible. These buildings, which contained storehouses and offices and living quarters, were called "hongs." A group of Chinese merchants, called the "Hong Merchants," took care of all the trade of the foreigners. The Europeans could sell only to these men, and buy only from them, and see only them ; they never saw the customs officers or the mandarins of the city. The Hong Merchants were responsible for the safety of the foreigners and all their goods ; they were also responsible for their good behavior while in port.

In front of the foreign hongs stood tall flagstaffs, and on them were flying the gay flags of the nations that traded with China : England and France, Holland, Sweden, Austria and Spain. During the reign of Kien Lung, the last great Emperor of the last dynasty of China, a group of English colonies in America rebelled against England and set up a government of their own, calling themselves the United States of America. One of their first acts as a free country was to send a ship out to China to trade, and after that they sent many ships and did a thriving business with Canton. They were called the "New People" at first, but later, because they flew a pretty flag, with red and white stripes and a circle of stars on a blue field, their country was called the "Flowery Flag."



A young merchant looked forward eagerly to his first trip to Canton. After a long voyage around the Cape of Good Hope, stopping perhaps in India or at Singapore or Java, his ship, sailing proudly under its snow-white sails, came up the Pearl River and anchored about ten miles south of Canton. Thirty or forty other foreign ships were there, for they all came in the autumn when the southwest winds were blowing, traded during the winter and left in the spring, their sails filled with the north-east breeze. He left his ship there and traveled to Canton in a smaller boat. It was a lovely trip. Orchards of peach and lemon and orange trees bordered the river banks and beyond them he saw the tilled fields, as neat as gardens, and the low roofs of farms and villages. Here and there graceful pagodas, of seven or nine stories, stood on the hill-tops. All along the banks small boats, with curved

roofs of matting, went briskly up and down, sculled with one oar.

As they drew nearer to the city, there were many more boats, until the harbor itself looked more like a town than a piece of water. Huge coasting junks, with their matting sails, with great eyes painted at their bows, so that they could see their way, moved slowly in and out. Ferries filled with passengers went across the river, loaded cargo boats went slowly past. The crashing sound of a gong was heard, and a mandarin's boat, its crew in fine liveries, cleared the way for itself through the crowd.

Everywhere the little boats, with matting roofs, darted like fishes, for millions of people in China live on these boats, and never set foot on land. There they are born and eat and sleep and ply their trades. Everywhere there was shouting as people sold their wares: this boat was piled with fruit and that with vegetables; here was a barber out to shave the heads or dress the hair of those who live on the river; here was a peddler of gay paper toys and there a candy maker, all in boats, and as much at home on the water as if they had been in a marketplace on land.

It was all gay and fascinating for a foreigner to see and the journey was over all too soon. Our young traveler drew up to a wharf in front of the foreign hong and there he was met by the manager of the American hong and given a room and a Chinese servant to look after him. Of course he was longing to see what was inside the high walls of the city behind its strong gates, but that was forbidden. "You cannot go beyond these streets that surround the hong," he was told, "if you want exercise, you must walk up and down the square beside the wharf, or along the streets. That one is Old China Street

and the narrow one is called Hog Lane. You can buy curios and trinkets there in the Chinese shops, but your cargo must be bought from the Hong Merchant who will take charge of you."

That evening, perhaps, he was invited to dine at the handsome hong of the English East India Company. Its spacious dining-room was lit by candles that hung in heavy chandeliers from the ceiling; a life size portrait of the King of England was at one end of it; the table gleamed with fine porcelain and silver and the dinner was brought in by quiet Chinese servants. No women were allowed in the foreign hong, but the men kept house in a way that was worthy of the fame of their great trading company. Thrilling tales were told around that table; of desperate fights with the Malayan pirates; of typhoons in the China seas; of a trip to the Fiji Islands, when a ship had been suddenly surrounded by a hundred war-canoes, filled with fierce warriors, armed with spears and bows. There were other more peaceful tales; of the graceful, jeweled dancers of Java; of a dinner with Howkwa, the Hong Merchant, in his beautiful house, with its many courtyards, its delicately carved verandahs and pavilions, and its lovely ponds and gardens. Life at Canton was pleasant enough, in spite of rules and regulations.

The Hong Merchants were well-educated, fine men, for their position was a responsible one. The foreign merchants, too, were no longer the rough adventurers who had come to China two centuries ago, but sober and honest gentlemen. So they got along very well together and business has probably never been carried on more honestly and politely than it was in Canton in those days. No one was allowed to teach Chinese to any foreigner, and so these dignified men spoke to each other in an absurd sort of baby-talk that is called

“pidgin English.” “My sellee number one silk,” a merchant would say who wanted to advertise his wares. “How muchee you pay ?”

Everyone made a great deal of money, for the foreigners paid good prices for what they bought in China, and yet when they got home they could sell the goods for ten times the price that they had paid. All the industries had flourished under the Ching Emperors. The workshops of Suchow and Peking turned out screens and boxes of deeply carved lacquer ; all over the Empire the women tended their silkworms and wove the silks that were needed both for China and for the foreign trade ; the furnaces of King-te-chen burned day and night and new colors were discovered for porcelain, peach-bloom and ox-blood red and mirror black. Plates were made, painted with the coats of arms of French or English or Spanish families ; in the comfortable homes of Holland and Sweden and the United States housewives set their tables with the blue and white porcelain that was decorated in Canton. But although nearly every country in the world wanted the lovely things that China made, more than anything else they wanted tea.

Tea had first been taken to Europe by the Dutch, in the seventeenth century, and at first it was a great luxury, costing \$25.00 or \$50.00 a pound. But so much of it was wanted that the ships loaded more and more of it and it became cheaper and was more widely used. In England, particularly, people drank nearly as much tea as the Chinese did themselves. In Kien Lung's time, twenty million pounds of it was exported every year from China, and money poured into the Middle Kingdom in exchange for it, for no other country raised tea at that time. It was very hard for the other countries to find things that China wanted, to sell in exchange for tea.

The Americans brought furs from the northwest coast, and sandalwood from the Pacific Islands, the Dutch brought spices from Java and Sumatra ; the English, unfortunately, found that the opium that was raised in India was wanted in China. Opium is a dangerous drug that is pleasant to take but that weakens the mind and body of those who use it.

China did not really need any of these things. It did not matter very much to the Chinese whether the foreign traders came or not, but it mattered a great deal to the foreigners. Tea had become almost a necessity. That was why the Chinese could make any laws and rules that they liked at Canton, and the foreigners had to obey them. If they did not obey, trade was stopped and no tea was sold, and that was such a serious matter that they usually gave in and obeyed, and trade went on. So the Chinese had the upper hand in Canton and the western barbarians were kept in their proper place. They were known among the people as "Foreign devils"—the English were "Red-haired devils," the Dutch "Holan devils," the Americans "Flowery flag devils," and so forth. In government reports they were called "The outside barbarians."

You can understand very easily how the Chinese felt about them if you will look at the geography of their country and remember its history and its religion.

The Middle Kingdom is a vast country that is separated on all sides from the rest of the world. On the east and south is the ocean, the broadest ocean in the world ; on the north and west are deserts and mountains, the highest mountains in the world. Therefore it was very natural for the Black-haired People, who saw their fertile lands surrounded by these barriers, to think that their country was "All that is under Heaven." All the people who lived about them had been less civilized than they, and all those people had learned

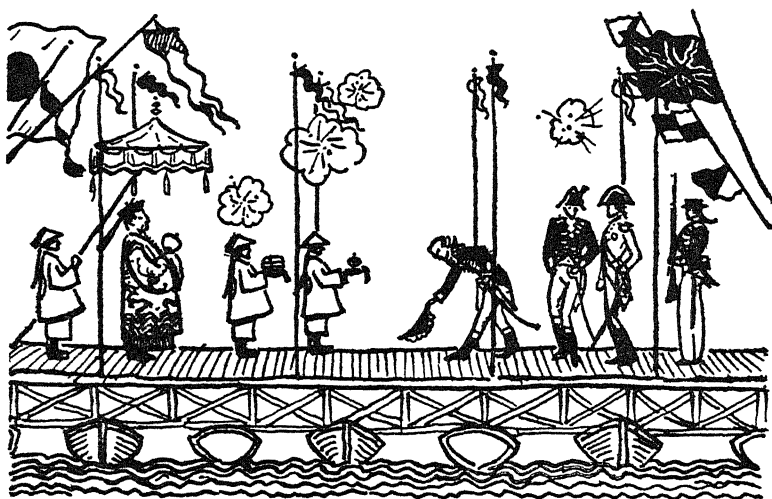
from them, the Tartars, the Japanese, the Koreans, the Tibetans and the people of Indo-China. So it was natural for them to think that they were the "Central Flowery Land," the one great civilized country, and that all other countries were barbarous until they, too, learned the civilization of China and shared in its blessings. They did not know that away back in the time of Yao and Shun, Egypt and Babylonia had had great civilizations of their own, and they did not know that, now, the nations of Europe had grown up in the West, and that they, too, had a civilization as fine as that of the Middle Kingdom.

You know what their Plan of living was ; there has never been a greater vision of civilization. Heaven and earth and man were to live in harmony together, obeying the laws of God ; men were to live happily with their families and at peace with their neighbors. The order and rhythm of Heaven was to flow through everything, into the smallest details of human life, just as it flowed into the smallest bud and leaf and formed them after its own pattern. So all the small things of life, especially good manners, were very important to the Chinese, and everyone who did not behave as they did seemed very rude and uncivilized to them. And as a matter of fact, they had far better manners than any Western people.

Good government, of course, was a very necessary part of the Plan and, to them, all government centered in the Son of Heaven. He was the representative of God on earth, the ruler of all the world, for sooner or later, they believed, all nations would become civilized and be vassals of the Central Flowery Land. Therefore, the only reason any other nation could have for coming to China was to become a vassal, and to bring tribute to the Emperor. And everyone who came

into the presence of the Emperor must kneel down three times and knock his head on the ground nine times, for the Emperor was his lord, the ruler of all the world. They did not know that there was any other kind of government besides their own.

So they still thought of their country as the center of the world and of art and civilization, and they looked upon the Europeans as just another tribe of outer barbarians, a particularly disagreeable and disobedient tribe, since they did not want to learn the ways of the Middle Kingdom, or to pay tribute to the Son of Heaven.



Now **THE** nations of Europe did not like the way the Chinese felt about them. They did not like to be called barbarians, and they did not like to be forbidden to enter China. They had too much respect for its size and power to think of conquering it, but they wanted to deal with China and trade with it as they did with other nations. And it hurt their pride to

think that any one country should think itself so much better than all the others.

Ambassadors had been sent, at one time or another, to Peking, to try to change this state of affairs. Russia, Portugal and Holland had each sent two or three embassies. But the gifts that the ambassadors had brought had been accepted as tribute ; they themselves were made to kotow to the Emperor ; and the Chinese believed that the western nations were coming to pay homage to the Son of Heaven. Twice Russia had sent no presents and so the embassy was not received ; once the ambassador had refused to kotow and he had been sent back without seeing the Emperor. Another ambassador had settled this question very cleverly ; he agreed to kotow to the Emperor if a Chinese mandarin of a rank equal to his own, would kotow before the letter of the Russian Czar. In this way, he made the Chinese acknowledge the Czar as the equal of the Emperor.

This matter of the kotow, you see, was a very serious one. Kotowing to the Emperor meant that he was your sovereign. It was all very well for Marco Polo, who was a merchant traveling in a strange land, to kotow to its ruler ; it was all very well for the Jesuit priests, who never intended to leave China, to kotow to its Emperor ; but it was a very different matter for an ambassador to do it. An ambassador represents his country and acts for his country. If he kotows to the Emperor of China, it means that his country pays homage to China, and is its vassal.

Besides, the kotow seemed very strange to the Europeans. The Chinese had done it for thousands of years and it did not seem at all strange to them. It was simply an act that showed their obedience and loyalty to their ruler. At the Emperor's court, when he came and sat on his throne, everyone stood

silent, with downcast eyes, for it is rude to look directly at one's superior. Then the master of ceremonies called out loudly "Kneel down!" And everyone knelt, whether one person was there or thousands of people. "Knock your heads on the ground!" cried the master of ceremonies, and everyone touched his head three times to the ground. "Stand up!" And they stood up. This had to be done three times. "Kneel down! Knock your heads on the ground! Stand up!" "Kneel down! Knock your heads on the ground! Stand up!"

This seemed to the Europeans a very humble act indeed, and a rather foolish one, for their manners were different. They knelt on one knee before their kings, and on both knees only when they prayed to God. They never bowed their heads to the ground even in church.

In 1792 England decided to send an embassy to China. The tea trade was very important to the English; they wanted to be able to trade with other Chinese ports besides Canton, and with Peking itself. They wanted to have an English ambassador living in China all the time, as ambassadors do now all over the world, and they wanted to send Christian missionaries into China. Above all, they wanted China to recognize England as a nation equal to itself and to have pleasant and courteous relations between both nations.

It would be a hard task to persuade China to grant any of these things and the ambassador would have to be a very wise one. The Earl of Macartney was chosen, a man who had had experience in both Europe and Asia. He went with a little fleet of three ships, and a staff of about a hundred men; a military guard, secretaries, artists, doctors, scientists and musicians. He took with him a letter from King George III of England to the Emperor Kien Lung, and six hundred cases

of presents, which were all products of western skill, things that would be new and interesting to the Chinese. The English were determined to show that their country was just as honorable and powerful as China.

The embassy was met with the greatest honor by Kien Lung. The fleet did not go to Canton, but directly to Tien-Tsin, which is the sea-port of Peking. It was met there by a fleet of magnificent barges and Lord Macartney was greeted by ministers of the Emperor, who invited him to enter the barges and travel in them to Peking. He and all his staff were guests of the Emperor all the time that they were in China; they were lavishly entertained and very courteously treated. As they moved slowly up the river the banks were crowded with row after row of faces, staring at the newcomers; men stood away out in the water to watch them and even the women came out and stood looking over the men's shoulders. No Englishman had ever gone up the Pei-ho before.

Everywhere they stopped there was a banquet and the mandarin of the city or district came to pay his respects. In one place a theatre was built on the river bank opposite Lord Macartney's barge, and all day long the Englishmen were delighted with the colorful, exciting show, even though they could not understand a word of it. They were even more interested in all that they saw about them, and they admired what every other traveler had always admired in China, its wide, beautifully cultivated fields, the quietness and order of the people, their cheerful songs as they rowed the barges, and their politeness. They were convinced that this was the richest and happiest Empire in all the world.

At Peking they found that the Emperor was at Jehol in Mongolia, his favorite hunting park, so they must travel farther. They did not dare to carry the gifts, some of which were

of delicate machinery, over rough roads, so most of them were unpacked and set up at Peking. The mandarins looked at them with the greatest interest. There was a planetarium, a pretty piece of machinery which showed the motion of all the planets around the sun, a telescope, a glass lens so strong that it would melt metal, a model of an English ship of war, six light cannons, mounted on wheels, a coach with gilt carving, glass windows, velvet seats and comfortable springs. This was particularly pleasant to the Chinese, for their carriages are small and have no springs, as they travel usually in sedan-chairs carried on men's shoulders. They found the coach very comfortable, but were shocked to see the driver's seat raised above the one where the Emperor would sit. That seemed very disrespectful and the seat had to be taken off and arranged differently. There were many other presents besides these ; two fine glass chandeliers, portraits, books of engravings and so forth.

When these were carefully stored away, the embassy went on to Jehol, Lord Macartney riding in an English carriage that he had brought, the others on horseback. They were comfortably lodged in the palace there, "The Seat of Grateful Coolness," in the "Garden of Innumerable Trees." The Emperor would receive Lord Macartney the next day. What of the kotow ?

There were long discussions about it, between the ambassador and the mandarins. Both sides, through interpreters, explained how they felt about it and the palace buzzed with conversation on the subject. Lord Macartney thought of doing as the Russian ambassador had done, and having a Chinese minister kotow to the letter of the king of England, but he was resolved to do nothing that would place his country in a lower position than that of China. Finally the mandarins

asked him, "What would you be willing to do to show your respect for his Imperial Majesty?" "When I approach my own King," answered Lord Macartney, "to whom I owe my deepest devotion and loyalty, I kneel upon one knee. I shall be glad to show, in the same way, my respect to his Imperial Majesty." This seemed reasonable to the mandarins, who reported it to the Emperor. He also was satisfied, for Kien Lung was large-minded, and besides, he was a Manchu, and only a few centuries back his ancestors had been living in the free Tartar way, careless of manners.

So all was well, and the next morning, before dawn, the ambassador and his staff assembled in a big tent in the Emperor's garden, where the audience was to take place. In 1792 men dressed beautifully in the West as well as in the East. Lord Macartney knew that costume was an important part of ceremony in China and he dressed himself in a handsome suit of embroidered velvet, and a velvet mantle, with his hair powdered and tied in a queue, as the fashion was at that time. When the Emperor was seated on the throne, the ambassador came forward, and, kneeling on one knee, held high above his head the jeweled box containing the letter of the King of England. Kien Lung, who was then a keen-eyed, erect old man of eighty-three, took the box graciously, spoke to Lord Macartney and gave him a piece of jade, carved in a form that meant prosperity and peace.

There was a banquet, more gifts were exchanged, and the day passed pleasantly, a very interesting day to the group of Englishmen who, for the first time, saw the head of the great country about which they had heard so much. They stayed for a while in Jehol, riding about the country, watching the festivities that were given on the Emperor's birthday. Then they all went back to Peking and Kien Lung saw the other

presents that had been brought to him and was much pleased with them. A few days later a mandarin came to Lord Macartney, bringing the Emperor's answer to the King's letter, which meant that the embassy must leave and return home. Beautiful gifts were sent to the English King and given to every member of the embassy ; even the sailors of the three ships, who had never gone to Peking, received a present from the Son of Heaven. Courteous farewells were said and the fleet sailed home.

The Englishmen felt that their trip had been successful. They certainly had not been treated as vassals, but with the greatest honor and courtesy ; they had been immensely interested in all that they saw ; the artists had made drawings everywhere they went and a long book was written by one of the secretaries ; letters had been exchanged between the rulers of the two nations. Had they opened the way for friendly trade and intercourse ? What answer had the Emperor sent to their requests ?

When his letter was translated and delivered to the English King, they found that very little had been gained. The letter is too long to quote, but this is, in the main, what it said :

"You, O King, live in a distant region, far beyond the borders of many oceans, but, desiring humbly to share the blessings of our civilization, you have sent an embassy respectfully bearing your letter. To show your devotion you have also sent offerings of your country's produce.

"Our dynasty's majestic virtue has reached every country under Heaven and kings of all nations have sent their tribute by land and sea. We possess all things ; we are not interested in strange and costly objects and we have no use for your country's products. I have accepted your tribute offer-

ings only because of the devotion which made you send them so far.

"I have read your letter ; it shows a respectful humility on your part. I have shown great favor to your ambassador ; I have entertained him and given him many gifts. I am sending you, O King, valuable presents of which I enclose a list. Receive them reverently and notice my tender good will toward you.

"As to your request to send an ambassador to live at my Heavenly Court, this request cannot possibly be granted. Any European living in Peking is forbidden to leave China or to write to his own country, so that you would gain nothing by having an ambassador here. Besides, there are many other nations in Europe beside your own ; if all of them asked to come to our court, how could we possibly consent ? Can our dynasty change all its ways and habits in order to do what you ask ?"

"Your ambassador asks us to allow your ships to trade at other ports beside Canton. There are no hong's and no interpreters at any other port, so that your barbarian merchants could not carry on their business there. For the future, as well as the past, your request is refused. Trade may be carried on only at Canton.

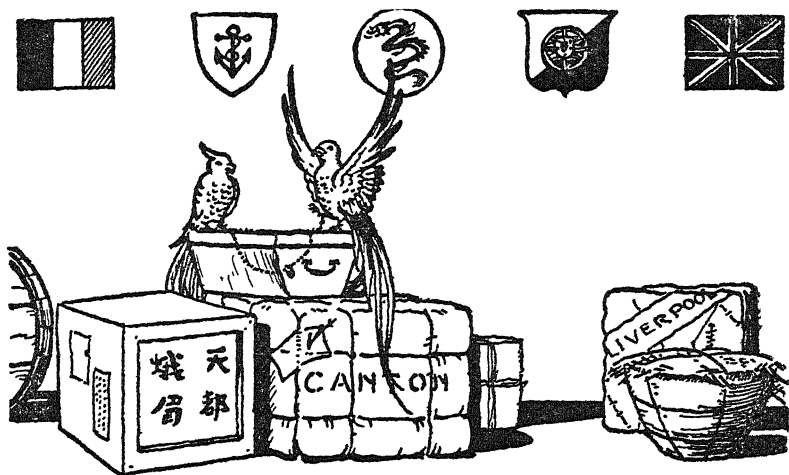
"The request that your merchants may store and trade their goods in Peking is also impracticable. My capital is the hub and center around which all the quarters of the earth revolve. Its laws are very strict and no foreigner has ever been allowed to trade there. This request is also refused.

"Your ambassador has asked permission to have your religion taught in China. Since the beginning of history, wise emperors and sages have given China a religion which has been

followed by the millions of my subjects. We do not need any foreign teaching. The request is utterly unreasonable.

"I have always shown the greatest kindness to tribute embassies from kingdoms which truly long for the blessings of civilization. To you, O King, who live so far away, I have shown greater kindness than to any other nation. But your demands are contrary to the customs of our dynasty and would bring no good result. I have therefore answered them in detail, and it is your duty to understand my feelings and reverently to obey my instructions henceforth and for all time, so that you may enjoy the blessings of peace."





CHAPTER 17

THE MANCHU DYNASTY [1644-1912]

CHINA had been so thoroughly separated from the rest of the world that, during the nineteenth century, it was living as it had lived in ancient times, and anyone who went there stepped into a civilization that reached away back to the beginning of history and was not touched by modern thoughts and ways. The Manchu Dynasty was like the Chou Dynasty, just as a full grown tree is like the sapling that it used to be. The roots of the tree, and the lines of its trunk and branches, are the same as those of the sapling ; its shape is the same ; only it is higher and thicker and its branches are more widely spread. Most of the ancient nations of the world had fallen, and a sturdy second growth had sprung up in their place, but China stood as it had always stood, like a strong old tree, its crest lifted to the sky, and its deep roots reaching down into the primeval soil from which all the nations of the world originally came.

The people still felt the presence of the spirits of nature, and honored the great mountains and the rivers. Thousands of

pilgrims came each year to the Tai Shan, the holy mountain in Shantung, climbing to its summit by steep stone steps, where Shun had once climbed among the rocks, with his robes girded to his knees. Temples and monasteries are built there now, and in its soil are buried the prayers and the jade offerings of many Emperors.

And the river-dragons and the dragons of the sky and earth, were they still there? So everyone would have said in the nineteenth century and so most people will tell you now. Dragons brought the summer rains and formed the hills and sent forth the streams. By many rivers temples were built and in the temples little snakes were kept and fed and prayed to when there was a drought. They were supposed to be dragons, who can take any shape that they please, this shape being more convenient than their own.

They say that one time the Emperor Kien Lung, coming back from a hunting trip, stopped to rest at the Temple of the Black Dragon, who lived in a spring on the temple grounds. "Tell the Black Dragon," said his Majesty, "that I desire to speak with him." So the dragon was told and said that he would be glad to receive the Son of Heaven. When the Emperor and his courtiers went to the edge of the spring, they saw coiled on the rocks, a little snake with its head lifted, its bright eyes looking at them. The Emperor turned to the priests and said, "I expected to see something great and wonderful. This is not a dragon; it is nothing but a little snake." As he spoke, the snake whipped around and vanished, but the waters tossed and splashed against the stones and a great thundering voice arose from the spring. "Was it anything like this that you expected?" it roared, and out of the water there came a huge claw, with five talons as sharp as iron and scales as big as shields. It rose up and spread out until

it covered the very sky, and its shadow darkened the whole temple and fell on the group of men who looked at it with awe and fear. The Emperor bowed low and apologized humbly for his thoughtless words, and gradually the claw was drawn down, and grew smaller, and finally disappeared into the water. Great respect was paid to the little serpent after that, you may be sure.

The unseen spirit world was so real to the Chinese that they never built a house or a tomb until a place had been found which was sheltered from the evil powers and open to all the good powers of nature. For the Yang and the Yin were always at work, creating and changing and destroying all things ; they flowed in currents through the earth, and one's house or tomb must stand in a place which did not receive too much of either power, but where they were in harmony with each other. The earth and the water and the stars, too, must be in harmony in that place, or your house would not be a peaceful one and your life would be disturbed.

There were men who made a study of this ; it is called "feng-shui," which means "wind and water" and every important building was put up according to its laws. A gentle slope, protected on three sides by hills, and open to the south, was usually a good place. Straight lines were dangerous—a straight road or stream leading up to your house, a steep cliff or perfectly flat ground—for evil spirits travel in straight lines and must be turned aside before they reach you. They are stupid and can easily be fooled ; twist the path that runs to your house and they will lose their way ; just inside your door put up a screen of wood or brick, leaving just enough room for people to pass on either side of it, and the spirits will think that they can go no farther, and will turn away again.

There were more gods than there had been in the olden

times. Besides the gods of earth and sky, there were many lesser ones, some of whom were men who had done great deeds and had been raised to the rank of spirits. One who was greatly loved was Kwan Ti, the god of war, who had been a hero in the time of the Three Kingdoms and was now looked to as a slayer of demons and evil ghosts. There was also the God of Wealth, whose image, veiled by the curling blue smoke of incense-sticks, stands in every shop and in many houses; the God of Literature, beloved of scholars, the God of Long Life, a merry old man with a very high head, and the Kitchen God, who lived in every home. Each city had its spiritual mandarin, the city-god, who was carried through the streets twice a year to inspect them; every trade had its patron god, every junk and sail-boat its image of the Queen of Heaven. And beside these helping spirits, there were the many Taoist gods and the many Buddhist saints, for all three religions flourished in China. It seemed that, as the population grew, so the population of the spirit world also grew, and all of its inhabitants seemed as real to the people as they were themselves.

Now there were many wise scholars and philosophers who did not believe in ghosts or gods, for their master, Confucius, had said very little about spirits, but had said that if people were upright and true they had nothing to fear. It was the simple folk who told these tales in the market places and at home on winter evenings. But scholars and mandarins, and the Emperor himself, took part in the great ceremonies which had always been as regular a part of Chinese life as the seasons themselves, and which were the oldest part of their religion.

For in the nineteenth century A.D. the Emperor, and the governors of provinces and the mandarins of cities, did very much as the kings and the feudal princes had done in the nineteenth

century B.C. They met the seasons at the gates of the city and welcomed them as honored guests ; they sacrificed to the mountains and the rivers and the planets. Shen-nung was not forgotten ; outside the southern gate of Peking was a beautiful temple, surrounded by fields and groves of trees, dedicated to him. There the Emperor went in the spring and worshipped before the tablet of the Farmer-King and made his offerings. Then, accompanied by his ministers, he went out into the Field of God, and plowed three furrows with a yellow plow, a high minister walking beside the ox, another holding the seed, a third sowing it in the imperial furrows.

In the spring the Empress, too, with her ladies, dressed in their flower-colored robes, went to a temple in the Imperial City, raised in honor of Lei-tsu, the wife of Huang Ti, and paid honor to her, with music and offerings of food ; and afterwards they went out and picked mulberry leaves and brought them to the sheds where the silkworms were fed and tended. Later they wove and embroidered the silk that came from these worms, and made them into garments worn by the Emperor at the great sacrifices. The year was still a round of ceremonies, performed with color and music and splendor, in honor of the spirits of heaven and earth.

The greatest of all, the sacrifice to God at the winter solstice, which Yao and Shun had offered long ago, was still performed by the Manchu Emperors every year. Surely it was one of the most beautiful acts of worship ever known in the world, offered on one of the most beautiful altars. When Yung Lo rebuilt Peking, he raised the Altar of Heaven outside the southern gate of the city, on the east side : the temple of Shen-nung was on the west. It was surrounded by a wide park with meadows and groves of trees, and like all the ancient altars, it was open to the sky. It was made of three wide, circular

terraces of white marble, rising one above the other, connected by flights of nine broad steps, at each of the points of the compass.

On the day before the sacrifice, the Emperor was carried from his palace in his chair by sixteen bearers, followed by the highest mandarins of his court. He went through silent streets, for this was a solemn day, and everyone along the road must stay indoors and not even look at the Son of Heaven as he went by ; the side streets were shut off with blue curtains. That night he spent in the Hall of Fasting, a building on the temple grounds, and shortly before dawn, in the cold darkness, he walked to the great altar, followed by his court and the choirs of singers and musicians, all dressed in blue, like himself, for blue is the color of Heaven. The altar was lighted with round lanterns of blue silk raised on poles ; clouds of incense rose from big bronze censers placed on each of the three levels ; the wide white marble terraces, with their delicately carved balustrades, gleamed through the darkness. What a sight this was, under the bright winter stars, or in the light of a waning moon, or perhaps brushed by a light fall of snow ! Choirs of men and boys sang the splendid old hymns, a young bull, perfect, and all of one color, was burned at the side of the altar, and the Emperor, mounting the highest terrace, knelt and bowed his head to the ground, praying to God in the name of all the people.

He was still responsible for all that happened in the Empire ; he was the One Man, the father of the people, and the welfare or the ruin of the country was in his hands. He could appoint, recall, or behead any mandarin in the land. The government was still divided into the six departments that Wu Wang and the Duke of Chou had made, only now there were six boards instead of six ministers, and they were made

up of many men, for the work was very great. But they had the same names, the Boards of Civil Office, Rites, Revenue, War, Crime and Works.

The provinces were ruled by governors and viceroys, appointed by the Emperor, and were patterned after the imperial government, each with its Six Boards. They were almost like independent states, except that they paid a revenue to the imperial treasury and reported regularly and humbly to the Son of Heaven. And he sent special mandarins traveling through the country very often, to see that all was well. Each province was divided into districts and prefectures, with their own mandarins who were responsible for them. The plan of the Chou Dynasty had worked wonderfully well and it was not much changed.

Although the highest positions in the government were open to everyone, as you know, because of the literary examinations, the greatest respect was paid to all mandarins, and the differences of rank between one mandarin and another were very strictly observed. The rank of any man could be known by looking at him. When the Manchus conquered China they had forced the men to change their costume, and dress as the Manchus did. The Chinese were made to shave the front part of their heads, and braid their hair in a long queue which hung down their backs. Their wide loose sleeves were changed to tighter ones, which ended in a long, curved cuff like a horse's hoof, which reminded them that they were ruled by Tartar horsemen. Otherwise the costume was not very different from their own and was a dignified and beautiful one.

The men wore a round cap on their heads, and the cap of a mandarin was topped by a jeweled button, set in a standard of wrought gold. A mandarin of the highest rank wore a ruby button, and one of the next rank a button of coral. Next

came a sapphire button, then one of lapis lazuli, then one of rock crystal, and one of white shell ; the last three buttons were of plain or wrought gold. The rest of his costume, too, its embroideries and its girdle, showed his official rank ; a peacock's feather, attached to the cap, was a mark of high honor given by the Emperor.

And the villages, the thousands of little farming communities all over the Empire, were as free as they were in the days of Yao. The farmers and the fishermen might still sing :

*We rise at dawn
And rest at sunset,
We dig wells and drink,
We till our fields and eat :
What is the power of the Emperor to us ? **

For the Chinese village had always been a very free and self-governing little place. Since the population had become much larger, the amount of land that each family owned had become smaller. A family could live very comfortably on what it could raise on four acres of ground, and many a household lived on less than that, for with their careful farming they could make a living on even a quarter of an acre, if necessary. And that patch of land, however large or small it might be, gave all they needed. On it they grew cotton for their clothes, and hemp for their shoes and ropes, grain and vegetables for food, or rice and tea, if they lived in the south ; they kept hens and pigs, and possibly ducks and geese. The women made the clothes and the men their tools, and if they needed greater skill, they did not have to go far, for somewhere in the village there was sure to be a smith, a wheelwright, a potter, or any

* See page 18.

other craftsman whom the community needed. They chose their headman from among the village elders, and he was responsible for them all to the mandarins appointed by the government.

As long as they kept the peace, the villages were not bothered by anyone ; they paid a small land tax to the government and that was all. They managed all their own affairs, such as educating the children, building roads or bridges, keeping up the village temple or holding fairs and festivals. In the villages and towns, the craftsmen had their guilds just as they always had, and the people still loved to gather around the storyteller in the market-place, and listen to tales of ghosts and fairies, of dragons and of foxes.

Sometimes a whole village was made up of just one big family, descended from the same ancestor. In that case, they had one ancestral temple in which they all met at festival times, and the headman was probably the oldest direct descendant of the ancient ancestor. The elders of each branch of the family helped him in his duties. In fact most of the quarrels and difficulties that arose were usually settled, not by police or judges, but in the families themselves. If one man stole from another, or if any injustice was done, the elders of the two men's families met together and usually settled the question between them. That was one reason why the villages were so peaceful and why they were so easy to govern.

And had family life changed since the days of Shun ? It had not changed in the least ; the oldest man in the family was still its head, his sons and his grandsons lived with him in the same home, and all that each of them earned or owned belonged, not to himself, but to the family. They say that a long time ago there was a family that became famous for its happiness and its peace. For nine generations, no one (except, of

course, the daughters as they married) had left the home; the household was very large and yet there were no quarrels, only love and joy and courtesy. Even the dogs, when their food was set before them, waited for each other until they were all there, before they ate. The Emperor heard of it, and as family harmony was valued more than anything else in life, he sent a messenger to that house. The messenger said to the Elder of the family, "His Majesty the Emperor wishes to know the secret of the happiness of your family. He asks you to write it down for him on this paper."

The old man, who had knelt to receive the Emperor's orders, rose and took the papers and his writing brush. He wrote for a long time, tracing about a hundred characters; then he rolled up the scroll and handed it back to the messenger. When the Emperor opened it, he read the hundred characters and found that they were all the same; the old man had written a hundred times over the one word, "Patience." "Patience, patience, patience, patience," was the secret of the happy family. So it was in olden times, and so it was now in the nineteenth century.



BUT IT was not all patience; there was much fun, too, in the big households. Suppose, for a moment, that you are a rather small Chinese boy, living in your ancestral home. In just a few days New Year's Day, the greatest festival of the year, is coming and you have a long holiday from school. The house has been in a bustle for a week. Your mother and your aunts and your older sister have been cleaning every corner of

it, for not a speck of dust must be left on New Year's Day. The most tempting smells come from the kitchen where every sort of good thing is being cooked for the holidays. The women tell you to go and play and keep out of the way—little boys are of no use at this time—so you and your cousins and your brother run off and play at tip-cat or shuttlecock in a sunny courtyard, for it is late in January and still very cold. The New Year in China comes any time between our January 21 and our February 21. It is a movable festival, like Easter, depending on the moon, for the Chinese measure their years by moon months.

You wait eagerly for the evening, for today, the 23rd day of the 12th moon, the Kitchen God goes up to Heaven and you want to give him a great farewell. You know the Kitchen God well; his picture, stamped on brightly colored paper, is pasted in a shrine above the kitchen stove. He knows everything that everyone of you has done all through the year, and tonight he is going up to Heaven to make his report about your family. After the New Year he will come back again. So that evening the family, led by their Elder, your grandfather, goes into the kitchen and offers a feast to the god, whose name is Tsao Wang. Sweet things are given to him, cakes and candied fruits and honey. A little of the honey is smeared on his lips, so that he will say sweet things about you all in Heaven. You wonder for a moment whether he remembers what you did that day last spring—? After the feast, your grandfather bows before the picture and takes it down. He carries it respectfully out into the courtyard and sets it on a little altar, or perhaps, in a little paper sedan-chair. "Grandfather," you whisper, "may I throw the grains on the roof for Tsao Wang's horses?" And he gives you a handful of grain to throw on the roof for the steeds who will carry the god

away. Then the picture is set afire, and in the leaping flames Tsao Wang flies up to Heaven, and you and your cousins set off fire-crackers and make a splendid noise to send him off.

The holidays are so exciting that you can hardly sleep. It is like the Western Christmas, New Year and Easter all thrown into one. New Year's Eve comes ; your mother has made you sleep that afternoon, for you will be up all night. You are dressed in your best clothes, scarlet trousers thickly wadded to keep you warm and bound around your ankles with tapes, a blue fur-lined jacket, a warm fur cap with a red tassel, and embroidered satin shoes. Shortly before midnight the family assembles, your grandfather, grandmother, your uncles and aunts, your father and mother and your cousins and brothers and sister. One of your uncles who is the prefect of a distant city, has come home with his family, for all mandarins are given a month's holiday at this time. It is often the only time in the whole year when they can see their family, for no mandarin may hold a position in his own province. You are shy of this dignified uncle, for his cap has a blue button on it and in back, slanting down towards his shoulders, hangs a short peacock's feather. Yet, with all his honors, he bows down as humbly as you do before your grandfather and touches his head to the ground.

In the courtyard an altar has been raised, with flickering candles and smoking incense ; the court is hung with soft-colored lanterns swinging a little in the cold night air. There, just as the Emperor is high priest for the whole nation, your grandfather, the family Elder, acts as high priest for all of you. Very dignified in his long silk robe, his kind old face very quiet and solemn, he kotows before the altar and thanks the high gods for the past year.

Another altar has been raised to the household gods, and there, too, the Elder kneels and thanks them for their care. Besides Tsao Wang, there are the two fierce guardians of the gate. It is said that the great Tai Tsung was troubled by dreams and evil spirits so that he could not sleep. Two of his bravest generals said to him, "We have defended Your Majesty's Empire from all its enemies ; we can also defend Your Majesty's person from any evil demon. Permit us to watch at the door tonight." So they stood, one on each side of the door, and no spirit dared to pass them. But the great Emperor, not wishing to keep them up every night, ordered portraits to be made of them and he set these up before his door. The devils were as much afraid of the pictures as of the generals themselves, and Tai Tsung slept in peace. Later, these pictures were used in every house to drive off any lurking evil ones who might be about. To them and Tsao Wang and the gods of the court and the well, your grandfather kotows and gives thanks.

And then you all go to the hall of your ancestors, which is the very center of your home. Here you were brought by your father, when you were a tiny baby, here he taught you to bow and knock your head on the ground as soon as you were able to stand up. Your grandparents have told you about the portraits that hang around the hall : that ancestor was a general of the Sung Dynasty, who set his city on fire and died in the flames rather than yield to the Mongols ; that one was a member of the Han Lin Academy when Kang Hi was Emperor, and there are many others who have made your family honorable. Now a feast is set before them and they are invited to come and dine with you, for the New Year is a time of reunion.

You feel very safe with all these kindly spirits about you ;

not only your father and grandfather and your uncles will care for you and help you, but also these other ancient members of your family who are nearly as real to you as your own parents. It is like a little country, this family of yours, a little country inside the big country of China. It has its own history, its own written laws, its government and its religion. Your grandfather is its ruler and its priest ; the separate families living under the same roof are like the different provinces that make up the Empire. A little, warm, loving country inside a big, wide, glorious country. You feel very safe and at peace.

Midnight has come now and you all wish each other a happy New Year and sit down to a big dinner all together. Usually each family takes its meals in its own part of the house, but tonight you all meet together, and if you have quarreled with any of your cousins or your sister or displeased one of your aunts, you must say that you are sorry and make it all up before tonight, for the New Year must be begun with joy and peace and kind words. You eat the steaming meat dumplings, the snow-white rice, the cakes and pastries and candies, to your heart's content. And shortly afterwards, the night ends for you, for you have fallen fast asleep. The grown people of the family will be up till dawn, for Heaven and Earth, and the gods and the ancestors are greeted again and their blessing is asked for the coming year. But you have been carried off to bed, and know nothing until you wake to the sound of fire-crackers bursting in all directions and see the New Year's sun streaming into the courtyard.

The next week or two are a riot of good times and of gifts, for this is the time of year to give presents. New Year's Day itself is a home day ; your elders sit about and talk together, or they play cards or chess ; you boys play with your new toys and you all eat a tremendous amount, as Western people do

on Christmas Day. A day or two afterwards all your family's friends and their children come to see you, and you, too, dress in your best clothes and go out with your father to visit his friends and his relatives who live in other homes. You may go, too, to a fair held on one of the temple's grounds, and that is immense fun ; there are booths with every kind of toy and candy, which you can buy with the money you have been given ; there are marvelous acrobats and magicians and puppet shows, and there is all the noise and hubbub and color and excitement that everyone loves in a fair.

Finally, on the fifteenth day of the first moon, comes the Feast of Lanterns, and with this the holidays are really over. It is the prettiest holiday possible, for everyone in China, it seems, has a gay lantern, and at nightfall every house is hung with them and processions of them go through the streets, glowing with every color. There are lanterns in the shapes of birds and animals and men and flowers, lanterns on wheels that run along the floor, round lanterns with gyroscopic lights that you can roll around the room while they are lighted, and best of all there is the great dragon, all lighted up inside, that is carried through the streets by a dozen men who make him twist and turn in the most terrifying way. Spring is coming ; the Yang power in the world grows stronger at this time and you can help it, with the light of your lanterns, to come and warm the earth and make things grow.

So at last the long holiday is over, and everyone goes back happily to work, for it has been a joyous time. You go to school again at sunrise every day and work hard over your books and your writing all day long, but you cannot keep your mind from straying ahead to the other holidays that are coming. In the spring, on the Day of Pure Brightness, you will go out with your family to tend the graves of the dead. You can

pick out all the grass and weeds that may have grown between the stones, while the others sweep and repair and make offerings before the tomb. Then you will picnic together in the warm spring sun.

Your heart jumps when you think of the fifth moon, which^{*} comes in midsummer, for on the fifth day is the Dragon Boat Festival! Then on the river that flows past your city the long narrow boats, carved and painted like dragons, race to a goal, with the crashing of gongs and cymbals, and the shouts and applause of the spectators, who are lined on the river banks and who crowd the river itself with gay boats and barges. All day long boats of all sorts row up and down the river and in the evening little lamps are set afloat on its waters and sail slowly down-stream. Your grandmother has told you the story of this Festival. "Long, long ago," she said, "during the Chou Dynasty when the feudal states were warring with each other, there was a wise and honest minister in the state of Chu. He tried to make his prince follow the ways of Yao and Shun, but his prince would not listen, and the country went from bad to worse. Finally, when he saw that there was nothing he could do, the minister wrote a poem in which he told all his sorrows and his fears, and then he drowned himself in the river. So, ever since then, people have gone out in boats to try to find his body and then put offerings of food upon the water to feed his spirit."

In the early autumn comes the Feast of the Moon, for the Black-haired People have always been great lovers of the moon. When the eighth moon is full, you stay up all night and for once, instead of sleeping, you enjoy to the full that glorious brilliance that floods your house and throws black shadows under eaves and gateways. The scholars of your family write poems during the night; the women dress the altar in the

courtyard and pile up the round moon cakes, and prepare the feast ; you look hard at the moon and try to see in it the little White Hare that stands under the cassia-tree, grinding the drugs that make the elixir of life. You know that he lives there, and if you look very hard you can see him.

One more happy holiday, later in the autumn, is the Festival of Climbing the Heights. This is an old, old custom, which has its own story, but the thing you like best about it is the kite flying. Most of the people in your town go out to the nearby hills on that day and fly their kites. Not just the boys, but the men, for the big kites need all of a man's skill and strength to keep them in the air. And oh, how pretty they are, when there is a good breeze and a clear sky, and a crowd of kites, in the shapes of gaily-colored flowers and butterflies, birds and animals, climb up and up against the clouds ! The men and boys play games with each other ; one tries to hook the other's kite and capture it—if he can do it, he may keep his prize ; others tie a sharp knife to their kite string and try to cut another's string and send his kite flying off like a freed bird. Cords and whistles are attached to some, and they hum and sing like harps and flutes as they fly. And in the evening, little lanterns hang from them and carry their colored lights up among the stars.

Of these, and other times of feasting and merriment you think as you dream over your books. All over the Flowery Land other families, in other places and in other ways, are keeping the same holidays. They have done so ever since the world began. Each festival brings you close to the spirits of nature which surround you, each one reminds you of ancient times and of the heroes and wise men who made your country what it is now. Your own ancestors took their part through all the ages of history ; they gave you this home, your very

self belongs to them ; through their service to the state they helped to build up this great homeland that is your world. You must study hard ; you must take your part, too, in the rhythm and the pattern of its life.



INTO THIS WORLD, for China seemed like a small world in itself, complete and contented with all that it had, the European nations forced their way, in the middle of the nineteenth century. Of course, sooner or later, this was bound to happen. No nation can shut its doors to all the rest of the world for very long. Fortunately it cannot, for nations, like people, learn from each other, and get new strength and inspiration from meeting each other. During the Han and the Tang Dynasties, China profited by its contacts with the West, and it learned much from both the Tartars and the Hindus. And see what happened to Europe because its people went to Asia during the Crusades !

The doors of China were forced open because of trade. Although business was carried on with great honesty and safety at Canton, there were many things that the foreign merchants did not like. They did not like to have to live in one little row of houses outside the walls of Canton, where they could not even bring their wives and children ; they did not want to deal only with the Hong Merchants ; they wanted to buy and sell freely to anyone whom they chose. They did not want any of their men, if they committed any crime, to be punished by the Chinese, for torture was still used in China and the prisons were filthy and unhealthy. They would punish anyone who did wrong themselves. They wanted to be

able to see the customs officers and mandarins of Canton, for extra duties were often put on their goods and they could not ask about them or protest. Trade could be stopped and they themselves could be ordered away any time the mandarins pleased. They were treated, indeed like "outside barbarians" and they did not like it.

Besides, the English, particularly, still wanted their country to be recognized as the equal of China. They wanted to send ambassadors to Peking, and not only to trade with Chinese merchants, but to have friendly relations with the nation itself and with its ruler. Surely this was a reasonable desire. They had sent Lord Macartney with fair requests, which had all been refused ; they sent another ambassador twenty years later, when Kien Lung's son was on the throne. He would not kotow, and so he was very rudely sent away from Peking as soon as he arrived, without even seeing the Emperor. The Chinese still could not understand why anyone should come to the Flowery Land except to pay homage and tribute to the Emperor, the ruler of all the world.

There was another cause of trouble between China and the foreigners, and that was opium. It was first brought to China by foreigners and the people learned to smoke it mixed with tobacco, and found it pleasant. It is a terrible drug, for at first it makes people feel very happy and comfortable and strong, so that they want more and more of it, but finally it poisons them, weakening them until their bodies are nothing but skin and bones and their minds are idiotic and they want only one thing—opium and more opium. When they once start taking it, it is very hard to give it up, and so most people who smoke it die of it. The Chinese had never been drunkards and drinking was no temptation to them, but the smoking of opium proved to be a great temptation. More and more of

it was bought and more and more people began to smoke it.

And from whom was it bought? First from the Dutch and Portuguese, then from the English, then from anyone who would bring it. All the foreigners who could get it brought it to China, for here at last was something that the Chinese wanted to buy. The Americans bought it in Turkey and carried it to Canton, but the English gradually supplied most of it, for they grew it on their conquered lands in India. For the first time silver money, instead of flowing into China in exchange for its teas and silks, began to flow out of it in exchange for opium.

The Chinese soon saw the frightful harm that this drug was doing to the people who smoked it. In 1800 the Emperor forbade any opium to be brought to China. Alas, this command only made people want it more. The foreign ships continued to bring it, breaking the laws of China; the Chinese mandarins and merchants smuggled it into the country, ruining their own people. Only the Emperor and some of the high officials did their best to stop the trade; only two or three of the foreign merchants refused to carry opium in their ships. For there was great profit in it; \$500 was a low price for a chest of opium and the ships carried hundreds, and even thousands, of chests. In 1839, 40,000 chests were brought to China, nearly all of it in British boats from India.

The Emperor tried, once and for all, to stop the trade. In 1839 he sent to Canton a special mandarin named Lin, an honest and high-minded man. He demanded that the foreign merchants deliver up to him all the opium on their ships. They refused. He ordered the foreign hongs to be surrounded by soldiers, their Chinese servants to leave them and their food supply to be cut off. Threatened by starvation, the foreigners yielded, and gave up 20,000 chests of opium, not one

of which they had a right to sell in China. It was destroyed at once, and the merchants were made to sign a pledge never to sell it again. Then the servants came back, food was sold again, and all was friendly, at least on the part of the Chinese for they thought that the trouble was all over. But the English were very angry at the blockading of the hong and the seizing of the opium.

Another thing roused trouble. A Chinese was killed by drunken English sailors, and the Chinese demanded that the murderer be handed over to them for punishment. The English refused, and when war junks came to seize the man they fired, sinking four of the junks. This meant war.

A fleet of warships was sent out from England, and the Chinese, who thought it would be a small matter to drive the barbarians away, found that they were no match for modern guns and armies. They had known nothing but victory when they had fought, under Kang Hi and Kien Lung, against the best warriors of Asia, but now they were easily defeated by a few thousand men from across the sea. One sea-port after another, between Canton and the Yangtze River, fell before the European guns until at last the important city of Chinkiang was taken, which lies at the meeting of the Yangtze River and the Grand Canal, commanding the entrance of them both. The small garrison of Manchu and Chinese soldiers fought bravely but they fought with old-fashioned firearms and bows and spears, against English cannon and rifles. When they were defeated, they first killed their families and then themselves, rather than fall alive into the hands of the enemy. From Chinkiang the English went on to Nanking, the "Southern Capital," the heart of southern China. But before the city was attacked, peace was made. A treaty was signed between the two countries in 1842, on board an English warship.

By this treaty, four ports besides Canton were opened to foreign trade, the island of Hong Kong, at the mouth of the Canton River, was given to the English, foreign officials were to be treated as the equals of Chinese officials and given equal respect. Also China, having been beaten, must pay the expenses of the war, \$12,000,000, and \$6,000,000 besides for the smuggled opium which had been quite rightfully destroyed at Canton. This sum is known as an "indemnity" and was not the last one that China had to pay in its relations with Europe. In another treaty, a little later, it was agreed that any Englishmen who committed a crime in China, should be tried and punished by their own courts, and not by the Chinese.

Now to the Chinese, the whole cause of the war had been the opium question, but to the English this had been only one of the causes. The English fought to open the doors of China and they succeeded in opening them part way, at least. Foreigners were allowed to live in the five treaty ports and to carry on trade with anyone there, but they could not travel more than half a day's journey into the country, or live in any other part of China. They could not yet send envoys, or ministers, to live in Peking and to represent their countries there. The other foreign nations made treaties with China just like the English one, and after this, anything that was granted to one country was granted to all the others.

Nothing was decided about opium in the treaty, and the trade in it went from bad to worse. Smuggling increased; the drug was brought openly into the treaty-ports, and in Hong Kong, which now belonged to the English, public smoking dens were opened. "Why will you not stop growing opium and so remove the evil entirely?" asked the Chinese officials. "China supplies Europe with tea and silk; there is not one thing we send out that can harm anyone. England poisons

China with opium. Why not root it up and grow healthful grain in its place?" "If your people were virtuous and your mandarins honest," answered the English, "you would have no trouble with it. If we did not cultivate it, someone else would. Why do you not make the trade lawful, charge a high duty on opium and make as much money out of it as we do?" "Never!" answered the Chinese. "We will not put a value on riches, and injure the lives of our people."

It was a sad business and it brought immeasurable harm to China. Fine men in both China and England did their best to stop it, missionaries protested against it, but the weakness of the Chinese who smoked it, and the greed of the foreigners and Chinese who smuggled it, were too strong for them. There was one important difference, however, between the two countries. The Chinese government, and its Emperors, hated the trade and refused to join it. "I cannot stop this flowing poison from coming into the country," said the Emperor, Tao Kwang, Kien Lung's grandson. "Greedy and corrupt men will defeat my wishes, but nothing will induce me to make money out of the misery and crime of my people." But the English government in India planted hundreds of thousands of acres with poppies, encouraged the trade, and made millions of dollars out of it every year.

So the Chinese had no reason to love the foreigners, or to desire more trade with them. They let them come into the country because they were forced to do so, but they disliked them just as much as ever; in spite of the treaty, the city of Canton would not allow a foreigner to enter its gates. The years after the war were not happy ones; Europeans venturing outside the treaty ports were sometimes murdered. The Chinese were resolved not to let the barbarians come a step farther into the country; the foreigners, especially the English,

were resolved not to stop until they could enter China as freely as they could enter any European country. How was this disagreement to be settled? There was no real understanding yet between China and Europe; the pride of China, its ignorance of other countries, and the greed and selfishness of the West, stood in the way.

So there was another war. In 1856-57 England and France together made war on China. Canton was bombarded and taken; the Chinese asked for peace and a treaty was made. The most important demands in this treaty were that European ministers live in Peking, that foreigners be permitted to travel anywhere in China and that the Yangtze River be opened to trade. The Chinese could not bear to grant these things, especially having foreign ministers live in Peking. Never, in the thousands of years of China's history, had a stranger come to the Imperial City, "the hub and center of the universe," except to give tribute or to live humbly as a subject of the emperor. For a foreigner to live there, in his own barbarous way, with his rude manners and outlandish costume, declaring that his king was the equal of the Son of Heaven, seemed unbearable to them. When the French and English came to Peking for the final acceptance of the treaty, they were stopped and their ships were not allowed to go up the Pei-ho.

This led to renewed war, in which the Europeans forced their way up the river and appeared before the gates of Peking. Unhappy things occurred; the Chinese acted treacherously and cruelly to a group of English and French envoys, and in punishment for this the Summer Palace of the Emperor, a beautiful group of buildings filled with the art and treasures of centuries, was burned to the ground by the English, after being plundered by both armies.

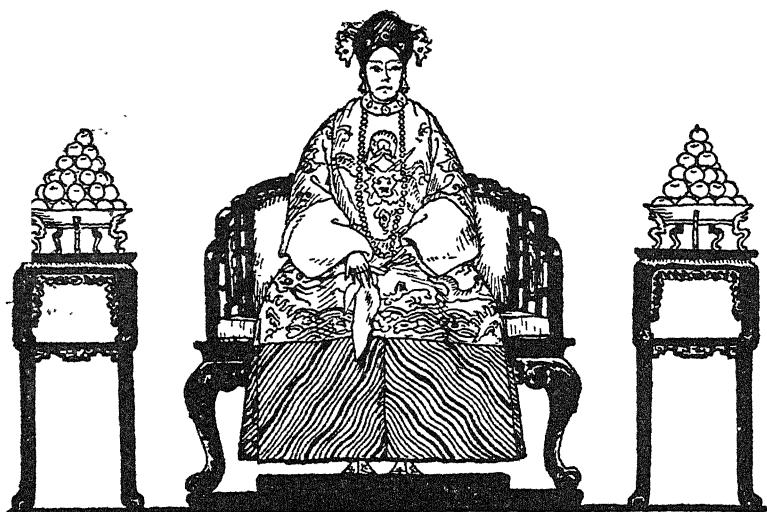
Peace was made again; the Emperor, an unworthy descend-

ant of the two great Manchu rulers, had fled from the city when the foreign armies came near, but his brother, in his name, signed the treaty. Six new sea-ports, including Tien-Tsin, were opened to trade, and three ports on the Yangtze River ; foreigners were permitted to travel anywhere in the Empire ; foreign ministers were to live in Peking and proper houses were to be provided for them ; the peninsula of Kowloon, right next to Hong Kong, was to be given to the British ; foreigners were never again to be called "barbarians" in official letters or edicts ; and of course a large indemnity was to be paid both to the British and the French.

There were two other important things in the treaty, which do not seem to go very well together. Against the wishes of the Chinese, the sale of opium was made lawful ; that is, it could be sold or raised freely anywhere in China, which of course meant that a great deal more of it would be smoked. And Christian missionaries were to be allowed to go all through the country, to teach the Chinese to "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you."

So at last the doors of the Middle Kingdom were forced open, and into it came these strong people from the West, bringing with them a civilization and religion entirely different from those of China. Could the rhythmical, peaceful life of China, with its age-old customs and its ceremonies, go on, if these people were going to push into every corner of the Flowery Land, bringing their new ideas, both good and bad, and teaching their religion ? Here was a new thing that had never happened before—a new challenge and a new danger. How would it be met, and what would come of it ?





CHAPTER 18

THE MANCHU DYNASTY [1644-1912]

AFTER THE WAR in 1860, the Western nations were amazed to find that China was weak, for they had always thought it a mighty Empire, as indeed it was. They did not realize how much the Black-haired People depended on their Emperor and how divided and helpless they were when the ruling dynasty lost its power. The Ching Dynasty was falling, after two hundred years of rule. Its Emperors no longer went on hunting-trips, spending days on horseback and nights in their tents, as their ancestors loved to do. They did not ride at the head of their armies, or travel through the provinces, but spent their time in the Forbidden City, taking their pleasure in the pavilions by the lakes, in the gardens and theatres of the palace, and they grew weak and corrupt. You know what happened in the rest of the Empire

when the court was corrupt ; mandarins followed the example of their rulers and cared for nothing but wealth and their own advancement ; the provinces grew restless.

Even before the war of 1860, a terrible rebellion had begun to sweep through the southern and central provinces. For the Ching Dynasty, glorious as it had been, was a Tartar dynasty, and many Chinese longed to be free of its rule. The rebellion was not put down for fifteen years, and the most beautiful cities in the Yangtze Valley, Nanking, Hangchow, Suchow and many others, were laid in ruins as a result of it. Provinces were devastated and millions of innocent people killed as they were during the Mongol invasions. In fact, the Mongols themselves were no worse than the half-mad leader of this rebellion, who called himself the "Heavenly King," and his kingdom the "Heavenly Kingdom of Great Peace." He could not have chosen a worse name, but the frightful slaughter and ruin that he caused is still called the "Great Peace" or the "Tai Ping Rebellion." Another revolt had broken out in Turkestan among the Mohammedans there.

So the Foreign Powers, pressing in on China from all sides, found it weak and divided, and they looked, as the Chinese said, "with tigerish eyes of greed" on its rich plains and long rivers, and its mines of coal and of metals which had hardly been worked at all. They were doing as they had done all over the world : they came first to trade, but when they found that they were stronger in war than the people of Asia or Africa or America, they took what they wanted instead of buying it, and seized the wealth and the products of other countries for themselves. And no country was richer than China ; it was still the honey-pot for all the bees of trade. It might have been in even greater danger than it was if only one of the strong Western nations had been against it. But

there were four, Russia, England, France and Germany, and each watched the other very carefully to see that it did not get more than its share of the rich prize. They began by taking China's vassal states.

Russia wanted Manchuria.* It wanted parts of Turkestan and Mongolia, too, but Russia's immense empire lay far in the north, and it wanted good land south of Siberia and a sea-port on the Pacific Ocean. So it looked toward Manchuria and Korea. In 1858 it made a treaty with China by which it gained all the territory north of the Amur River. In 1860, when the armies of France and England were in Peking, Russia whispered to China, "I know your enemies. I will persuade them to withdraw their armies, instead of conquering your whole country. I am your friend." Of course Russia knew that France and England were going to withdraw their armies anyway, but China did not know it, and in return for this kindness it gave to Russia all the land east of the Ussuri River, a valuable territory with a good sea-port. Russia took this, and named the sea-port "Vladivostok" or "Ruler of the East;" but it was not satisfied yet.

England had conquered the whole of India, and now it took Burma also. Burma had been a vassal of China ever since the days of Kublai Khan. It was an independent kingdom, but it sent tribute and homage to the Son of Heaven every ten years. Now it became a part of the British Empire, and although the English politely allowed it to send its tribute every ten years to Peking it was lost to China. From Burma, the English tried to open new trade routes into the southwestern provinces, Yunnan and Szechuan, and from Burma and India they turned their eyes toward Tibet.

France, at about the same time, had made itself master of

* Look carefully at the map between pages 353 and 354, as you read this chapter.

Indo-China. There it ruled over four small kingdoms, two of which had been vassals of the Middle Kingdom for centuries. China made war on France, but was defeated and lost its two vassals. The loss of these states was not very serious, for they were far distant, and the Empire was still immense, but it showed what the Western Powers meant to do, and was a danger signal.

And now, toward the end of the century, a new danger came, not from the West, but, most surprisingly, from the East. Japan had shut its doors against the foreigners just as China had done. And like China, it was separated from the rest of the world, and, in the nineteenth century, was still living its ancient life. Japan was a feudal empire, and although it was highly civilized, it was living as the people of Europe lived in the days of knighthood. The Japanese are warriors, like the Europeans, and they loved their swords as the knights of King Arthur and Charlemagne loved theirs. They loved their freedom and their own ways of living, and they did not want anyone to set foot on their beautiful islands. But they could not keep their doors shut against the world. Just as England had forced open the doors of China, so the United States forced open those of Japan. A small fleet of war-ships came there in 1853, and the American commodore asked permission for his country to trade with Japan, and to stop at its ports for fuel and provisions. He said that if these requests were refused, there might be war.

Fortunately there was no war. One port after another was opened, unwillingly. As foreign ships and gunboats came into their harbors, the Japanese quickly saw that the foreigners were stronger in war than they were. This touched their pride and also made them fear for their freedom, and they did one of the most astonishing things that has ever hap-

pened. They changed their whole way of living in a very short time and learned the ways of the West. They knew that they could not keep their freedom against these powerful foreigners unless they had a united government and modern ways of fighting. So the feudal princes stopped warring against each other and gave all their lands and their power back to their Emperor and promised him their absolute loyalty. They studied their own history and that of other countries also and they established a strong modern government, with their Emperor at its head. Then they learned Western warfare. They sent students to Europe and brought European teachers to Japan, and in less than fifty years after their ports had been opened, they had an army and navy as powerful as any in Europe. And the Western nations respected them, treated them as equals, and never laid a finger on Japanese territory.

But alas! They learned other things in the West. They learned to take, with their strong army and navy, what they wanted from other people. So Japan came, clothed in Western costume, and in modern warships, into the great drama that was being played, with the vast Empire of China as its stage. Japan wanted land, for its islands were small and its population was growing larger. Manchuria, which belonged to China and was the home of its present dynasty, and Korea, which was China's vassal, were both very near and very tempting. Japan wanted them for itself and it wanted to keep any European Power from getting them. So Japan made war on China, and its new army and navy smashed those of China to pieces. A treaty was signed, in which Korea was made an independent kingdom, while the big island of Formosa and some other smaller ones were given to Japan, together with the immense indemnity of about one hundred

and forty million dollars. Here was a new enemy, China's own neighbor, its own pupil, Japan !

And now look carefully at the map, for the plot is getting thicker. By this same treaty Japan was given the Liao-tung Peninsula, in Manchuria. You can see at a glance what an important place this is, and it has, besides, a splendid fortified harbor, which is now called Port Arthur. The other nations, who had paid very little attention to Japan so far, were amazed at its victory, saw its strength, and did not want it to hold such an important place as this. So Russia, France and Germany told Japan that it must not take the Liao-tung Peninsula, and Japan, not wishing to fight them all, obeyed, merely asking China for twenty million dollars more, to make up for it.

Of course, these three European nations did not do this because they loved China. They wanted to stop Japan and they wanted an excuse to ask for things for themselves. So far, excepting Hong Kong, no territory actually belonging to China had been taken from it, but now, seeing the easy victory of Japan, the Western Powers grew bolder. Two German missionaries were murdered in Shantung. Shortly afterwards, German warships appeared in the Yellow Sea, and seized the Bay of Kiaochow. Not to be outdone by this, Russia seized the very places that Japan had not been allowed to hold, Port Arthur and another harbor on the Liao-tung Peninsula. France demanded the port of Kwang-chow, near Indo-China. England, of course, was not going to let the others get ahead of it, and therefore took the important harbor of Wei-hai-wei in Shantung.

Each of these countries, besides, demanded the right to build railroads from their ports into China, and to open mines in order to build them. And China, unable to pay the tremendous indemnity to Japan, began to borrow money from

Europe. These railroads and mines and loans were just another kind of weapon, and a very powerful one, that the Western nations were using against China, for these things gave them power over the government and the inner life of the Empire.

So China was beset on every side with enemies, not only outside her borders, but inside them too. In the ports that had been seized and in the treaty-ports, the foreigners had settled down to stay. They had their own city government, their courts and their police, for they had been given the right, as you know, to judge and punish their own people when they did wrong. Therefore no Chinese official could touch a foreigner, no matter what he did, and knowing this, the foreigners felt very proud and free and were often rude and insulting. The ports were like foreign cities on the soil of China.

Christian missionaries lived in the open ports and in many other parts of the country. These men and women did not make their way as the first Jesuits had done, by their own wisdom and courtesy; they were not invited, as the Buddhist teachers had been long ago; they came as a result of war, and their way was opened for them by cannon. Many of them were good and holy people, but their coming brought a great deal of trouble. When any Chinese became Christians they had to stop worshipping their ancestors, and could not give money for their own temples or plays or festivals. This cut them off from the life of their families and their neighbors and made them disliked. If they did anything wrong the missionary took their side, and even went into court to defend them. And the magistrates, knowing that the foreign gunboats were behind the missionary, often gave in to him.

So, although some Chinese became Christians in good faith,

others did it because in that way they got the protection of the powerful foreigner. So many people did this that they were known as "rice Christians," that is, people who turned Christian for the advantage they could get from it. Many missionaries who believed devoutly in their own religion, insulted the things that are holy to the Chinese ; and they paid no attention to "feng-shui,"* but built where and how they liked, and offended the people. In Canton, the first thing that a man saw, as he came toward his city, was the two tall spires of the foreign cathedral, towering above all the roofs. Father Ricci would not have built that sort of church.

So the missionaries, and the Chinese Christians, were hated all through the country, but they could not be sent out because of the treaties and because, if they were killed or disturbed, the foreign warships appeared, as they had at Kiaochow. "First the missionary," said the Chinese bitterly, "then the gunboat and then the invading army."

And why, you may ask, did China put up with all this ? It had been beaten in four wars. It could not change its ways as quickly as Japan could, for China is more like a continent than a country ; the people in Peking speak a different language from the people in Canton, and a man from Szechuan cannot understand a man from Fukien ; one province hardly knew what was going on in a distant province, and did not care very much. The Emperor and his ministers were bewildered by all that was happening ; they had never dealt before with nations which were their equals, and they did not know how to do it. The Empire was weak from rebellion and from the foreign wars ; and it was the end of a dynasty. These are some of the reasons for its helplessness.

By the end of the century the foreigners began to talk about

* See page 327.

dividing China between them; even missionaries thought it would be a good thing if the land were handed over to the "Christian Powers." The Christian Powers were the nations of Europe. The different nations chose the parts of China that they particularly wanted; these were called "spheres of interest." The French preferred the three southern provinces nearest to Indo-China; the English chose the very heart of the country, the splendid Yangtze Valley, and Szechuan and Tibet; Shantung, the holy land where Confucius lived and was buried, where the Tai Shan stood, was marked out by Germany; Russia wanted northern Mongolia and Manchuria, and Japan wanted southern Manchuria, Fukien and most of the sea-coast. The Middle Kingdom and its civilization had not been in such danger as this since the Chou Dynasty, since the time of the warring states, when its own princes tore it to pieces and the Tartars, with hungry eyes, pressed in over its borders.



NOW INSIDE of China itself, something even more important than this was going on. Thoughts are more powerful than armies, as you will realize if you remember the Tartar invasions. The Tartars sometimes conquered China with their armies, but the Chinese always conquered the Tartars with their thoughts, and civilized them. Now for the first time in their history, the Chinese were meeting other thoughts that were as powerful as their own, the thoughts of the West. And the meeting of those two civilizations is far more exciting than the meeting of their armies.

It seemed at first as if more bad than good had come to the

East from the West. Whatever good had been done was lost in the flood of evil that had come upon the country. After the war of 1860, however, a few students went to Europe and America, sent by the government to study modern ways of fighting, or sent by missionaries to foreign schools. More foreigners, some of them very fine men, came to live in China, and the missionaries opened schools wherever they lived and translated Western books into Chinese. So gradually the thought of the West came into China, and found keen and eager minds to receive it.

One of the very best things that the West has to give is science. While all the great religions of the world have come out of Asia, Europe has carried the study of science to its greatest perfection and has given it to the rest of the world. Science has showed us the wonderful way in which our universe is made; it has searched into everything, from the farthest star to the tiniest forms of life, and has added immensely to man's knowledge and joy.

Beside this, as you know, through science men have made many wonderfully useful things, all sorts of machines, and ways to travel a hundred times faster than they could before. They fly through the air and go under the sea, and speak to each other across great distances by telegraph and radio and telephone. Science has changed all the conditions of life in an amazingly short time and made life more comfortable and safe and healthy. Wonderful discoveries have been made in preventing and taking care of illness so that there are no longer the terrible plagues and epidemics that there used to be; and people who have been badly injured can be saved.

Now the Chinese did not have this scientific knowledge. A thousand or two thousand years ago they had made won-

derful inventions—the compass, paper, printing, porcelain, medicines, gunpowder and so forth—but they had not developed that knowledge that we call pure science. Indeed, after the Mongol conquest in the thirteenth century, they did not do the new and vigorous things that they had done before that. Was the Mongol conquest a great shock to their life, or did the Ming emperors, in order to keep safe the civilization that was so precious to them, shut China in too closely? It is hard to tell. Nations need each other as people do; if they stay too long alone they stop producing great and beautiful things. Although the Chinese had made exquisite porcelain and painting and buildings during the Ming and early Ching Dynasties, they did nothing new or great in thought or art. When they shut the Europeans out at the end of the Ming Dynasty, they shut out the thing they needed most: science, and the eager, searching spirit of the West.

During the very time when they were shut out of China, the Europeans had done tremendous things. China looked back to the days of its sages and tried to live as they had lived; the West did not have anything very wonderful to look back to, and so it looked ahead, and was always trying to find new ways of living and to change things so that they would be better. They had invented machines, which made a very great change in human life. They had improved their governments; while they had been trading and fighting with China, there had been revolutions in America and Europe. These countries, too, knew how dangerous it was to have a weak or a bad ruler on the throne; and so they had taken some of the power away from their kings and had given it to the people. They had parliaments or congresses which were elected by the people and which really ruled the country. Some nations, the republics of America and France, even

elected their rulers, whom they called Presidents, who held office for only a few years, after which another man was elected.

They cared about the welfare of all the people, and did not want a few people to be very rich, and many people very poor. They cared about insane people and criminals, and treated them more wisely than they had before. They were always working at such problems as these and trying to make things better. Almost everyone in the West was taught to read and write, and most of the people had a good education. Women were educated as well as men, and during the nineteenth century, women began to do all sorts of things that they had never been allowed to do before; they took part in public life, and learned to do the kind of work that only men had done before that; they became doctors and nurses, teachers and scientists, and went into business and government. And women went where they liked in the West, and did not stay only in their own homes, as they did in China.

Then there was the religion of the West. The Christians believed in one God instead of many, and they were not afraid of ghosts and evil spirits because they did not believe in them, and because their God was all-powerful, all-wise and all-loving, and cared for everyone in the world as a father does for his children. Therefore every life, however bad or miserable it might seem, was precious in God's sight, and anyone who was a true follower of Christ, loved all other men as much as he did himself. For Christ said, "You must love your neighbor as much as you do yourself," and he said, too, "When you do anything for the least one of my brothers, you are doing it for me." That was one reason why these strange people, the missionaries, came where they were not wanted and put their own lives in danger to take care of lepers

and poor people and orphan children, and why, when there was a terrible famine in Shansi, some went there and died trying to help the people who were starving, although they did not know these people or even belong to their country. The thought that God loved all men and wanted them to be perfect made men want to do good and to work to bring the world nearer to perfection.

Now all these things were good ; some of them were not at all strange to the Chinese, some were entirely new. But it was a great surprise to them to find another civilization equal to theirs, less good in some ways and better in others ; to find new knowledge, a new literature, different ideas of government, a new and different religion. The Chinese had always loved knowledge and the few who first came in touch with these new thoughts, accepted them eagerly. Students who went abroad, and mandarins who met and talked with foreigners in China, welcomed everything that was valuable. They saw that China had been standing still for the last few centuries and they tried to arouse it into new life.

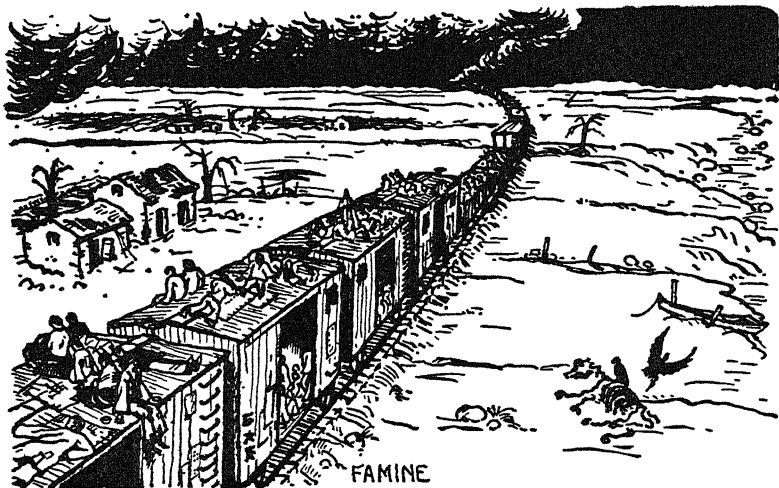
"Let us learn all that we can from the West," they said, "while we keep all the good things of our own civilization. Let us send our young men abroad to study, and let us invite foreign officers to train our soldiers and build up our navy. Let us have schools in every village and city and let us at once stop the old examinations that have been just the same for a thousand years. Let us build railroads and telegraphs and steamship lines, for they can carry our goods to the sea-ports and our soldiers to any part of the country that is attacked. If there is famine, railroads can carry food to the starving people ; the telegraph will carry messages to all the distant provinces ; and these new ways of travel will bring all the parts of our country nearer together, so that we can

work together more easily. Let us follow the example of Japan and learn the new ways, and let us learn them quickly or we shall be swallowed up entirely by the nations of the West!"

So a few railroads were built and orders were sent from the Empress to the viceroys by telegraph instead of by runners. Some viceroys invited foreigners to drill their troops; they opened steel and cotton mills, run by machinery, established colleges for the new learning and medical schools with foreigners at their head. But this was done only in the provinces that had wise and far-sighted mandarins, for the provinces were very independent, as you know, and did as they chose. The Imperial Government at Peking did very little.

After the war with Japan, the people who wanted change talked much louder. More students were sent to Europe and America and to Japan, which was much nearer. They learned quickly and eagerly; they came back filled with the new learning and taught their own people. They translated dozens of Western books on every sort of subject; the great novels of Dickens, Victor Hugo and Tolstoi were translated too. A Chinese scholar wrote about the change in Japan, the growth of Russia, and the history of Europe. Canton was a center for all this new study and excitement; for Canton had been the first city to come in touch with the foreigners; it was the port that opened most directly to all the rest of the world, and the people of the south are alert and vigorous. There were murmurs against the Manchu Dynasty. "It is the Manchus who have brought all this trouble upon us. No Tartar dynasty has ever ruled so long over the Middle Kingdom. It must go." And a young man named Sun Yat-sen who had studied in a mission school and a foreign college, said that China must not only overthrow the Manchus, but must change its whole government and become a republic.

The men who wanted these changes were still very few, and there were very many who wanted no changes at all, and whose only desire was to get rid of every foreigner in the land. The scholars, who loved the Classics and believed that they contained all the wisdom in the world, the mandarins who wanted to keep their power and their wealth, the millions of people who were perfectly content with the life they had and thought it the best in the world, hated the idea of change. So the new ideas had to fight their way slowly into power. Thoughts fight each other just as armies do, and their warfare is terrible. While on the outside, China was in danger of its very life, on the inside it was in a turmoil, the beginning of a great revolution.



THE SCENE of the drama changes. From the wide sweep of plains and sea and mountains, we turn to the high, thick walls of Peking, and to the yellow-roofed, scarlet palaces of the Forbidden City. The welfare of China was still in the

hands of its Emperors, and, although viceroys and scholars could do much for their own provinces, nothing could be done for the whole country except through its rulers. How were they to know all that was happening? They lived behind walls, surrounded with ceremony; they could know nothing but what their ministers and their eunuchs told them.

The Emperor, who had come to the throne after the war of 1860, had died young, and so his mother, the Empress Dowager, ruled until a new Emperor was chosen. She was ambitious and jealous and clever; so she chose another little boy, her nephew, to be Emperor, so that she could rule until he grew up. The boy, who was called Kwang Su, was studious and kind-hearted, but not very strong either in body or in character, while the Empress Dowager was strong and wilful and hot-tempered. He was very much afraid of her and he did just what she told him to do.

When he grew up, she gave the government into his hands and retired to her Summer Palace, but she kept a close watch over everything that was going on, and the Emperor had to come to see her very often and to honor her as his mother, for he owed his throne to her. She loved power and luxury; she never grew tired of watching plays and of picnicking on the lakes of the Imperial City; when her ministers put aside a great sum of money for a navy (which China needed very badly) the Empress took it and spent it on her Summer Palace, building a new one in place of the one that was burned in 1860. But the Emperor was different. He was a sad and quiet young man, and he was deeply troubled about the misfortunes of his country. The struggle that was going on all over the country was centered in these two people who lived behind the palace walls.

The men who wanted change, who wanted to reform their

country, thought that they might persuade the Emperor to listen to them. They reached him through his tutor, who was a scholar and a high mandarin, and he did listen, with deep interest. He read the books that they had written and translated, he listened to their plans and he believed that they were right.

And suddenly, in the summer of 1898, one reform after another came from the Emperor's pen, like the boom of cannons. The literary examinations, which every mandarin and scholar had taken for over a thousand years, were stopped, and other examinations, including the new Western knowledge, were to be given in their place. Schools were to be established in every village and town, colleges in every province and a big central university at Peking. The army was to be entirely reformed and drilled in Western methods. The laws about crime and punishment, the courts and the judges, were to be changed and made much better. Agriculture, trade and engineering were to be encouraged, and machinery and new methods were to be used everywhere. Books of all countries were to be translated and distributed all over the Empire and text books for the new schools and colleges were to be prepared. Useless mandarins were to be dismissed and the court was to spend less money on luxury. And the Emperor, instead of being hidden away in the Forbidden City, surrounded by ministers and eunuchs, would receive any letter written to him by anyone in the kingdom. This was like going back to the days of Yao!

Here was amazement! Chinese and foreigners were equally astonished, and the foreigners who loved China rejoiced. If these reforms could be put through and China became strong again, there would be no more talk of dividing it among the other nations; it would be respected and welcomed among

them, as Japan had been. But the Emperor had acted very quickly, on the advice of a few men ; there were many, many people in the country who wanted no change, and the mandarins, especially the Manchus in the north, knew very well that they would lose their power if changes like these were made. Some of the chief ministers and princes went to the Empress Dowager and told her that she must stop these reforms, that she must take the power into her own hands again and save the Empire and the Dynasty. She listened to them and said nothing.

The reformers saw what was happening and said to the Emperor, "The people who are against you are counting on the Empress Dowager to stop all that you are doing. You cannot bring about these great changes while she is in power. Shut her in one of the palaces, and set a guard around it, and kill her chief adviser, Jung Lu, who is the head of the army." This was not a modern, but an ancient way of doing things, and the Emperor unfortunately listened to it, for he would have been very glad to be free from the powerful will of his aunt. Whom could he trust to carry out such a plan ? The soldiers and the guards of the palace were commanded by men appointed by the Empress, and were loyal to her. He called upon a Chinese general, named Yuan Shi-kai, a capable man whom he thought he could trust, and told him to imprison the Empress in one of the palaces, and to kill Jung Lu. Yuan kotowed, and said that it should be done. Then he went immediately to Jung Lu and told him everything, and Jung Lu went straight to the Empress.

She ordered her chair and was carried to the Forbidden City with fury in her heart. She spoke angry words to the Emperor and struck him across the face with her fan. Then she ordered the guards to take him to a little palace on an island in one of

the lakes, where he was kept a prisoner, and a few days later he signed a paper giving up the throne to the Empress. His heart was broken. He had tried to do the right thing, for he knew that China could only be saved by raising itself, in education and military strength, to the level of the Western nations. He had failed ; and now he must sit, helpless, and watch the shame and the misfortune that were to come to China because this was not done. "My heart is filled with such great sorrow," he wrote to a friend, "that my pen cannot describe it to you."

The days of reform were over, for the time. The Empress took back nearly all the commands that Kwang Su had made and undid all the good that he had tried to do. Six young men who had worked with him were beheaded, and the other reformers were hunted out of the country. The Empire was still in a desperate state. Outside there was the danger of conquest by its enemies, and inside there was rebellion and turmoil. The Empress had thrown aside one way of saving it. What was she to do now ?

It was just at this time that the Western Powers were seizing the sea-ports and marking out their "spheres of interest." Anger and hatred against the foreigners swept over the country like a gust of wind. In the towns and villages, especially in the north, bands of men armed themselves and began to drill. They carried flags that said, "Protect the Empire ; kill all the foreigners." They practiced a strange sort of magic in their drills and recited charms ; they said that bullets could not kill them and that the spirits of the ancient heroes protected them. They called themselves the "Fists of Righteous Harmony" and so foreigners, for short, called them the "Boxers." In the winter of 1900 they began to roam about in bands, attacking the Chinese Christians, whom they looked upon as traitors to their

country, robbing and killing them and destroying their houses.

Now many of the old-fashioned and narrow mandarins at the court knew that the people were dissatisfied with the Dynasty and furious against the foreigners; they saw the enthusiasm and growing numbers of the Boxers, and half believed in their magic powers. Here perhaps, was a way out of all their troubles! These men would drive the foreigners out of the country, and all would be well again. "Let us kill all the foreigners," they said to the Empress, "let us drive them into the sea!" And the Empress, although she had seen three wars in which China had been beaten, was foolish enough to think that this could be done. She allowed the Boxers to drill in the wide courtyards of the Forbidden City, and ordered a general uprising and massacre of all foreigners.

This was a mad thing to do, for it could not possibly succeed and would only bring further trouble to the country, which was unhappy enough now. The Empress's wisest ministers told her that she could not make war on the whole world; even Jung Lu, her chief adviser, tried to stop her and said, "This is a piece of stupidity that will be remembered against China for all time." The Emperor wept when he heard of her decision. The wise viceroys in the central and southern provinces refused to take any part in the uprising and sent word to all foreigners that they would be perfectly safe and that order would be kept. And two brave ministers in Peking dared to change the order that the Empress sent to the provinces. She wrote, "Slay all foreigners;" they changed it to "Protect all foreigners," knowing very well that they risked their lives as they did it. And indeed, as soon as the Empress found it out, she ordered them to be beheaded. They went fearlessly to their death, saying to their executioners, "We shall be honored and praised for this after you have received your

punishment." And as they knelt to receive the death-blow, one said to the other, "We shall meet soon in Heaven. The Sages say that dying is going home."

Their devotion could not stop the mad rebellion. The Boxers, encouraged by the Empress's orders, swept through the northern provinces, killing every missionary they could find, often in a most cruel and barbarous way. In Peking, they destroyed houses and missions and schools belonging to foreigners and then attacked the Legations, where the ministers of the different nations lived. After 1860, you remember, foreign envoys were allowed to live in Peking, and at the time of the rebellion, ministers from several nations were living there.

These men represented their countries, and it is understood all over the world that an envoy or minister, even if he comes from an enemy, must never be killed or hurt. He is, in a way, a sacred person, because he stands, not just for himself, but for his country, and anything that is done to him is done to his country. The Chinese had known this ever since the time of Confucius, or before, but now the rebels, in their fury, forgot it. They murdered the German minister in the street, and for two months in the summer of 1900, they besieged all the Legations, in which were crowded the families and secretaries and servants of the foreigners, a guard of about 400 soldiers and many missionaries who had come there for safety. They defended themselves as well as they could, piling up the walls with sand bags, and fighting day and night against the attacks of the Boxers.

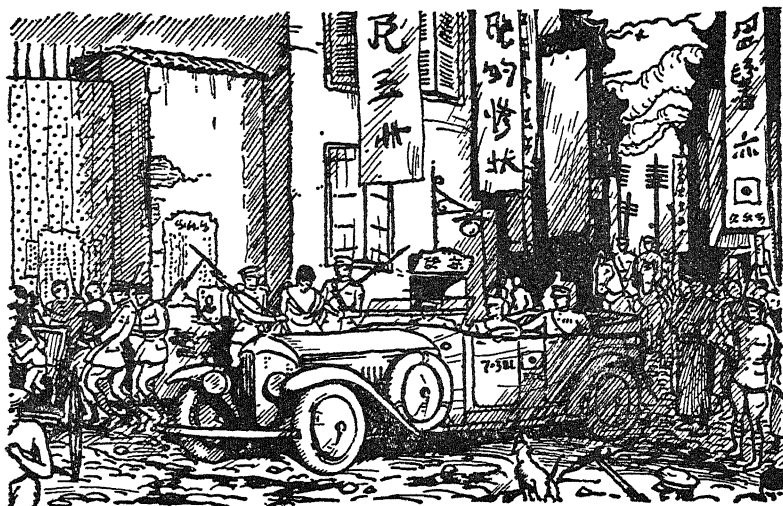
Now everyone in China, except those few who believed in the magic of the Boxers, knew what the end of this would be. As soon as the Foreign Powers realized what was happening, they sent warships and soldiers to Tien-tsin. As soon as these men could march, fighting their way, to Peking (for railroads

and telegraphs had been torn up by the Boxers) they appeared there; neat and efficient Japanese, British troops from India, turbaned and bearded, French Zouaves with their wide scarlet trousers, Russians, Americans and Germans. They immediately freed the besieged ministers, and the Boxers and Chinese soldiers fled before them. The Empress, too, taking the unwilling Emperor with her, escaped in a cart and did not stop until she had reached the ancient capital of Singan, in Shensi.

So once more Peking was in the power of foreign armies, but much more completely in their power now than it was in 1860. The city had already suffered terribly from the Boxer and other Chinese troops who had lived there all summer, destroying and looting all foreign houses and a great many Chinese ones. Now the foreign troops made the city more unhappy, for they plundered and killed without mercy, doing all the horrible things that soldiers do when their enemy is beaten and at their mercy. Silks were trodden in the streets, priceless porcelain was smashed with the butts of rifles as the soldiers searched for gold and silver. When they left China, the officers and the men went loaded with the riches of the ancient city.

A year later peace was made and China agreed to pay a new indemnity of \$325,000,000, for all the property that had been destroyed and the people who had been killed. And this latest defeat, this new loss and shame, was brought upon the country by one headstrong woman, who like the last Ming Emperors, could not see very far beyond the walls of her palace. It was time for the dynasty to go!





CHAPTER 19

THE REVOLUTION

THE BOXER uprising was a sad lesson to everyone who took part in it. It showed the foreigners how much they had made the Chinese hate them, and how strong their hatred might be if it were more wide-spread and better disciplined ; it was like a sharp kick from a fighter who was thought to be helpless. It taught the Empress Dowager that the foreigners could not be driven out of the country in that way, and she was clever enough to know when she was wrong and to do differently.

She came back after a year and a half in Singan, and during the next few years she did all the things that Kwang Su had tried to do in 1898. She ordered schools to be established, for boys and girls, where Western subjects as well as Chinese would be taught ; she ordered students to go abroad to study, and sent men to study the governments of other countries. She promised to make the government of China more like that

of Western countries ; she forbade torture and made the laws and the prisons better ; and she dismissed useless mandarins, as Kwang Su had done. What must the Emperor have thought as he saw these things done, and realized bitterly that all the shame of the Boxer War and the huge indemnity that would keep China poor for many years to come, would have been prevented if the Empress had helped him to do these things three years before, instead of stopping him !

She did even more than he had planned to do, in one very important way. She made up her mind to put an end to the opium trade, and she did lessen the use of that terrible drug enormously. After the Treaty of 1860, opium was grown all over China and more and more of it was smoked, until it seemed that the whole nation would grow weak and helpless from it. The Empress's plan was to stop growing poppies in China, to close opium dens, to punish those who smoked, and to cure those who had smoked so long that they could not give it up. She gave the country ten years in which to carry out this plan and the work was begun at once. The conscience of the Western nations had begun to awaken, too, and England agreed to stop growing the poppy in India just as quickly as it was stopped in China. Both countries kept their word, and opium, though it is still smoked by some people, is no longer the terrible danger that it once was.

All these reforms, however, could not save the Dynasty. All through the country groups of men were meeting secretly, planning to overthrow the Manchus and bring the country under Chinese rule again. All through the country, especially in the sea-ports, young students were talking together, day and night, about the new knowledge they had learned in the West and about the new China that could be made by using that knowledge. The Chinese who lived abroad, in America or

Hawaii, in Japan and Europe, in Singapore and Malacca, all wanted change and nearly all wanted to overthrow the Manchu Dynasty. Some wanted to set up another dynasty, which would have less power than before, and be more like a European kingdom, but others wanted a republic.

The leader of those who wanted a republic was Sun Yat-sen. He was the son of a poor farmer in the province of Kwangtung ; he had gone to school in the temple of his village, then to a mission school and later to the Medical Collge in Hong Kong. From the time when he was a student there he devoted himself to the saving of his country and he gave his whole life to establish the republic. When it was known that he was a revolutionist, he was condemned to death and a price was offered for his head, but he escaped, and after that had to spend much of his time outside of China. He traveled all over the world, talking to all the Chinese whom he met, rousing them to work and give money for their country, talking also to foreigners and winning their sympathy for China. People trusted him and loved him and loyal Chinese gave all they could. Farmers and laundrymen put into his hands the few dollars that they had saved after years of work ; a merchant in Paris sold out his whole business and gave Sun Yat-sen all he had received from the sale, and many other rich Chinese gave money. He worked just as hard in China, when he could get there, and in Japan, where the revolutionists met and made their plans. Gradually and slowly, so many men and women believed in the republic, and were willing to die for it, that the revolution could take place.

It was a very quiet revolution, when it finally happened. In the autumn of 1911 a bomb exploded by accident at Wuchang and the government discovered the plans of the rebels. This started things off sooner than they would have started other-

wise and all through the country soldiers mutinied against their officers and provinces rose in rebellion. Inside of six months thirteen provinces had declared themselves free of Manchu rule. A republic was proclaimed in Nanking, by men who had been sent there from all the free provinces and Sun Yat-sen was chosen as its first President.

That was good, but the Manchu Dynasty was not yet overthrown. The Empress Dowager and Kwang Su were both dead ; a new baby-Emperor was put on the throne and another Empress Dowager, a gentle woman, reigned in his name. It is said that when Kwang Su was dying, he asked that Yuan Shi-kai be killed ; when he could no longer speak, he drew a circle again and again with his finger, because "yuan" also means circle. This was not done, unfortunately ; when the revolution broke out, the new Empress called on Yuan Shi-kai to defend the dynasty. He was made Prime Minister and went on with his career of betraying those who trusted him.

Yuan was an able general and had a well-trained army at his command ; he had been Viceroy of an important province and had held high positions in the imperial government. Sun Yat-sen had a few bands of loyal soldiers and many devoted followers, but nothing that could be called an army ; he had, of course, never taken any part in the government of the Manchus. He was a great leader and thinker, the man above all others who had caused the revolution ; but he did not feel that he should be President. So he wrote to Yuan, offering him the presidency, if Yuan would support the republic.

Yuan accepted this offer gladly. The Empress, seeing that he would not fight for the dynasty, sorrowfully gave up the throne in the name of her little son. So, very easily and with almost no bloodshed, the Empire, which had lasted for over four thousand years, came to an end and a new China was born.

The day the revolution broke out, October 10th, is celebrated all over China and is called "Double Ten Day," because it was the tenth day of the tenth month.

In February 1912, Sun Yat-sen and his ministers, with a great escort of soldiers, went to the tomb of Hung Wu, the first Ming Emperor, near Nanking. They laid an offering of food before his portrait, burned candles and incense and announced to him that the beloved soil of China, its mountains and its rivers, had been won back from the Manchus, just as Hung Wu had won it back from the Mongols. "How could we have gained this victory if your Majesty's soul in Heaven had not given us your protection? Spirit, accept this offering!"

Then Yuan Shi-kai was inaugurated President in Peking, while Sun made his headquarters in Canton and, with many other men and women, set himself to the immense task of building up the new China.

For the revolution was not ended—it had just begun, when the republic was established. You can imagine how hard it was to start an entirely new form of government in a country that had been ruled for over four thousand years as China had been ruled. In the villages the people had always elected their headmen and the heads of their guilds, but except in the villages, every mandarin had been appointed by the Emperor or by viceroys or by someone higher than himself. No one had ever been elected as we elect people; hardly anyone had ever heard of voting by ballot; most of the people could not read nor write the thousands of characters that it was necessary to know. It was like turning the country upside down to have a republic.

In Canton, Sun and his followers formed a political party called the Kuo Min Tang, which means the National People's Party; it was like our Republican or Democratic Party and its

purpose was to carry out his ideas. He wanted three things for China, which he called the "Three Principles of the People." The first is "Nationalism": he wanted China to be completely free, the equal of other great nations, with no foreign cities, courts, soldiers or gunboats within its borders. The second is "Democracy": he wanted the people themselves to govern their country. The third is "The People's Livelihood": he wanted all the people to be able to earn a living that would make them comfortable and happy. Most of the people at this time were very, very poor. He said that these principles were like Abraham Lincoln's words, "government (1) of the people, (2) by the people, and (3) for the people." These have been the guide and goal of everyone who cares for the freedom and welfare of China.

When the republic was established, a wave of excitement and hope went all through the country. Men cut off their queues ; girls' feet were no longer bound ; more and more students went to America and Europe to study, and the schools and colleges of China were crowded with eager young people. Women went to school and college and began to take an active part in public life, bringing to it all the fine intelligence and devotion that till now they had given only to their own households. Men were finding a hundred new things to do. They did not know then what difficulties, disappointments and terrors lay ahead of them. Their hope and courage were high and they had need of both ; for, while it had been easy to overthrow the Manchus, it was very, very hard to establish the republic.



Within a year Yuan Shi-kai had betrayed the republic, just as he had betrayed Kwang Su and the last Manchu Empress. He did not want democracy ; he had accepted the presidency in order to get power for himself and when he had the power he showed his true character. He paid no attention to the constitution that was being written ; he made himself a dictator and put his generals into the provinces as governors. In July 1913, Sun Yat-sen sent a message to him asking him to resign and saying, "You have been a traitor to your country. As I rose against the Manchu Emperor, so shall I rise against you !" But Yuan did not resign. Instead, he drove anyone who belonged to the Kuo Min Tang out of the government. He defeated the weak forces that Sun sent against him and drove him and his followers out of the country. Then Yuan wanted still more power : first he made himself President for life ; then he tried to make himself Emperor. This time he went too far. All over the country the people made it very clear that they did not want another Emperor. This was very humiliating for Yuan ; shortly afterward, in 1916, he died ; of anger and disappointment, some people say.

His death, unfortunately, made things even worse. He had, at least, been able to hold the country together, but after he died, there was no one who could keep order. The generals, each with his own army, whom Yuan had sent to the provinces, fought against one another and whichever of them was the strongest controlled the weak government at Peking. Anyone who was strong enough raised an army, collected all the taxes that he could squeeze out of the people and called himself a war lord. Bandits roamed through the country and were not much worse than the soldiers of the war lords. For ten years, from 1916 to 1926, there was civil war all through the land, except in the south, around Canton. For Sun Yat-sen had come

back there and he and many other members of the Kuo Min Tang were patiently at work, starting schools and colleges, teaching and talking, rousing people to make China stronger and better, and building Canton into a modern city. They could not put the Three Principles into practice anywhere except in those southern provinces, for they had no control over the rest of the country. Nevertheless, the new tide of life that had arisen with the revolution was sweeping through the land in spite of bad government and in spite of civil wars. A new power was growing up that was to prove stronger than either Yuan or Sun ; this power was the youth of China, the students of the colleges and the schools.

These young people, who were studying hard the thoughts and sciences of the West as well as the wisdom and the literature of China, saw with disgust the selfishness and dishonesty of the men who were supposed to be governing the country. They also saw dangers that these men did not see.

In 1914 the first World War broke out in Europe. Japan, seeing that its European rivals were fighting each other thousands of miles away, thought that this was a good time to get control of China. So Japan joined the World War, siding with England and France against Germany ; then it took from Germany the port of Kiaochow and all the rights that the Germans held in Shantung. When the Chinese government protested against this, the Japanese sent back an extraordinary message, demanding that the government allow Japanese "advisers" to come in and run their country for them. This made the Chinese very angry, but they knew that they were not strong enough to fight Japan. They hoped, at the end of the war, when the Peace Conference was held in Paris, that Shantung would be given back to China ; but this was not done. Japan was allowed to keep it.

Then the students, seeing that they could not trust either their own government or other nations, took things into their own hands. In May, 1919, fifteen thousand of them marched through the streets of Peking, carrying banners and giving out handbills that read, "Down with the traitors !" "Return Shantung !" "Justice for China !" Shouting these words, they went first to the foreign legations ; turned back by soldiers, they marched to the houses of certain Chinese ministers who had favored the Japanese. They broke into the house of one of these men, crying, "Why have you sold your country ?" and the ministers fled for their lives. Thirty young men were arrested by the police and the next day all the students in the city went on strike, refusing to go to their classes until their comrades were set free. Many of the professors joined them.

The thirty were set free and the parades continued. The students sent telegrams to the Chinese at the Peace Conference in Paris, telling them not to sign any treaty giving Shantung to Japan ; they sent telegrams to colleges in other cities and provinces and those students, too, marched through the streets and went on strike. They boycotted Japanese goods ; that is, they refused to buy anything Japanese and asked the stores to refuse to sell any such goods. When the police tried to stop them, they cried, "Our country is in danger and we are trying to protect it. Have you no patriotism ? Are you not also citizens of the Chinese Republic ?" If they saw Englishmen, Americans or Frenchmen in the street, they gave them little papers that said, "You who have fought and bled for liberty . . . we ask for your sympathy. . . . We are fighting your battle as well as your own, for what you have done on the Atlantic we must do on the Pacific !" And to their own government they said, "Your treacherous actions have made the people gnash their teeth ! China is in great danger. Our conscience does not

allow us to be silent any longer. Let this be our last warning to you !” It was not only college students who were doing this ; school boys and girls, ten or twelve years old, joined them and did their part.

The men in the government were frightened. What were they to do, with the Japanese on one side and these young people on the other ? They tried to stop the students by arresting a thousand of them and shutting them up in a big building where they had to sleep on the floors and were kept for days with no food. The students went singing and laughing to the prison ; thousands more besieged the government offices and demanded not only that their comrades be set free, but that the government apologize for having arrested them. And the government obeyed. The prison doors were opened, with apologies ; the students poured out, joined their comrades and marched home, singing and triumphant.

By this time the whole country was aroused. Merchants and workmen joined the students, boycotted Japanese goods and went on strike. The result was that the ministers who favored the Japanese lost their jobs ; the Chinese who were in Paris refused to sign the treaty that gave Shantung to Japan and, in 1921, by a later treaty, Shantung was given back to China. Here was the new China in action !

In the south, the Kuo Min Tang was also growing stronger. Several southern provinces had separated themselves completely from the weak government in Peking ; they set up a new republic, run by the Kuo Min Tang, with Sun Yat-sen at its head. And at last they were training a strong modern army, so that the Three Principles of the People could be put into practice all over the country.

In 1925 Sun Yat-sen died, worn out by his long work and by many disappointments. He left a message to his countrymen :

"The revolution is not yet achieved ! Let my comrades follow the principles laid down in my books. . . . Let them strive and struggle until the victory is won !" In every school and college in China, in every meeting place of the Kuo Min Tang, in nearly every house, there is a picture of this man who is called the "Father of the Revolution" and often beside it are these words of his.

A great leader was lost, but another now came to the front, for China has always had leaders. Dynasty after dynasty has been established by men of the people who have risen up when they were needed. One of Sun's army officers, a young man named Chiang Kai-shek, took the lead in the Kuo Min Tang. It was he who had trained the new army. In 1926 he felt strong enough to lead his army northward to fight the war lords and to unite the country. For the first time the revolution had force behind it ; city after city, province after province fell before the disciplined armies of Chiang. He took Shanghai, the great seaport that is half Chinese and half a foreign city, near the mouth of the Yangtze River. He took Nanking, the old "southern capital" (as Peking is the "northern capital") on the Yangtze and made it his headquarters. The Kuo Min Tang built it into a fine modern city, while Chiang led his armies into the north. Within two years he had defeated the war lords and taken Peking. Its name was now changed to Peiping, which means "northern peace"; for Sun Yat-sen had wanted Nanking to be the capital of the republic.

The whole country was now under his control. At last, under such a leader, could the revolution be achieved ?



Alas, there was another setback. Just when victory seemed sure, there was a disagreement within the Kuo Min Tang. In order to understand this, we must look back a little way.

While Sun Yat-sen was in Canton, he needed help and money to do all the things he wanted to do for China. He asked for help from Europe and America, but, perhaps because they did not trust him yet, he got no help from them. The only country that did help him was Russia. In 1917 the Russians, too, had had a great revolution ; they had overthrown an empire as bad as that of the Manchus, and had set up an entirely new kind of government and a new way of living. So they sympathized with Sun and the Kuo Min Tang and helped them. They took back the treaties that Russia had forced on China and gave back any territory that the Russian imperial government had taken by force ; they sent advisers to Sun who helped him to make the Kuo Min Tang stronger by organizing it the way their own party is organized. There is only one political party in Russia, the Communist Party, and it runs the whole country.

Chiang Kai-shek went to Russia for help when he began to build up the army. He admired the Russian "Red Army" very much ; when he went home he trained his own soldiers along the same lines and soon made a better army than the Chinese had ever seen before. Many students also went to Russia and were filled with enthusiasm for what was happening there. The Russians were running their country in a way that had never been tried before ; it is called socialism. The government owns everything : all the land, all the factories, all the stores, and runs them for the people. All the people work for the government and are paid by the government and share in all that is produced. Most of the people in Russia, before the revolution, were very poor and could not read or write, just

like the people of China ; the new government was educating everyone and teaching them to use machines so that they could be comfortable and have more than they had ever had before. Many young Chinese thought that this was a wonderful thing to do ; they wanted the same kind of government for their own country and formed a Communist Party in China.

For several years the Kuo Min Tang and the Communists worked together in the south, but when Chiang Kai-shek started on his northern march there was a quarrel between them. If there was to be a united China, the Communists wanted it to be a country like Russia while Chiang wanted it to carry out Sun's Three Principles and to develop in its own way. The quarrel grew into a fight, and Chiang turned the Communists out of the Kuo Min Tang. When he had defeated the war lords and taken Peiping, instead of a united China, he faced the Communist armies in the south.

So there was civil war again ; after ten years of fighting between war lords, there were ten years more of warfare between men who disagreed but who wanted what they thought was best for China. This was a sad business ; thousands of fine young men were killed during those ten years. For six or seven years the fighting was in a southeastern province. After many hard battles Chiang drove the Communists from there and they made what they call the "Long March"—a 6,000-mile march, first through the south and then through the deserts, wilderness and high, wild mountains of the west, up to the northwestern provinces of Kansu and Shensi. There Chiang fought them again, as bitterly as he had fought the war lords, but they were not so easily defeated, for they believed as truly as he did in what they were fighting for and their armies were as good as his, although it was hard for them to get supplies and ammunition.

There was fighting, therefore, only in certain provinces ; in most of the country the Kuo Min Tang was in power and its men and women were doing splendid things.

Chiang Kai-shek had married the youngest daughter of a very extraordinary family, the Soongs. The father of this family, when he was a boy, had been sent to Boston, Massachusetts, because an uncle of his had a shop there and wanted a boy to work for him and to grow up in the business. He met other Chinese boys in Boston, however, who were going to school and meant to go to college and young Soong wanted to do the same thing. His uncle would not hear of it, so one evening he slipped out of the shop, went down to the harbor and hid himself in one of the ships that was docked there. When the ship was at sea he was discovered and taken to the captain who, instead of being angry, took a liking to the boy and later helped him to go to school and college. He became a Christian and took the name of the kind captain, calling himself Charles Jones Soong. When he was twenty he went back to China, married a Chinese girl and became a follower of Sun Yat-sen.

He had three daughters and three sons, all very clever and remarkable people ; they were all sent to America to be educated and have played a great part in the building up of China. The eldest son, T. V. Soong, has been Finance Minister and Foreign Minister ; the eldest daughter married H. H. Kung, who has been Prime Minister and has held other important positions in the government ; the second daughter married Sun Yat-sen and the third is Madame Chiang. The three sisters have all taken a deep interest in the welfare of China. Madame Chiang has been her husband's constant adviser and companion ; she has worked hard for the education of women and the care of children, for the health and cleanliness of the people.

She is beautiful and charming and is much admired both at home and abroad.

In spite of the bitter war against the Communists, much was done between 1926 and 1936 to strengthen and modernize China. Many more roads and railroads were built ; postal and telegraph systems were improved. Still more schools, colleges and hospitals were built and public health was looked after. Men learned modern medicine and surgery ; girls were trained to be nurses. The old laws were rewritten ; courts and prisons were established like those of Europe and the United States. Many factories were started so that China could send out its goods again and make money as it had done long ago. All through the country the educated men and women roused their people out of the old ways of living and taught them the new ways. In their summer holidays, students went into the villages and opened schools for the children. They also went from village to village giving plays because, in a country where very few people could read or write and where everyone loved the theater, that was a very good way to teach people new ways and new knowledge.

Reading and writing were being taught, too. A young man named James Yen had found out that if anyone knew one thousand of the fifty or sixty thousand characters in the written language he could get along very well and be able to read and write simple things. Therefore he and many other young people started to teach the "thousand characters" and soon farmers and workmen, old people and children were learning to read and write.

In the northwestern provinces, behind the fighting lines, the Communists were doing very much the same thing. They were opening mines and building factories, teaching the people to read and write, printing newspapers so that everyone in those

out-of-the-way provinces could know what was going on in the rest of China and in the world. They, too, sent theatrical companies to the towns and villages. Many Chinese farmers do not own their own land, but have to pay high rents to landlords and taxes besides, so that it is hard for them to make a living. The Communists took the land away from the landlords just as the Russians had done, and gave it to the peasants. They lowered the taxes and did everything they could to make life better for the farmers and workmen.



The revolution had three great setbacks that made it difficult to carry out the three purposes of Sun Yat-sen. The first setback was when Sun himself gave the republic into the hands of Yuan Shi-kai. The second was the split between the Kuo Min Tang and the Communists. The third was the hardest of all, for China, with its own problems still unsolved, had to fight a desperate war against an unjust and merciless enemy, Japan.

When the Chinese had refused to hand their country over to Japan, as they had been asked to do, the Japanese did not give up their plans ; they just decided to go about it in a different way. If they were not given what they wanted, they would take it. For Japan, unfortunately, was in the hands of greedy and ambitious men. They wanted China, with its fertile plains, and the minerals that lay in its mountains ; they wanted the hundreds of millions of Chinese people to work for them and to buy their goods. Japan had become a great industrial nation. It needed certain materials—coal, oil, cotton, iron and other minerals—in order to run its factories, its steamships and

railroads, its army and navy ; and its own islands produced very little of these materials. They looked beyond China, to Indo-China and Malaya, to the Philippines and the Indies ; they longed to drive the Americans and Europeans out of these rich lands and to own them themselves. They must do this carefully, however, and little by little.

In 1931, knowing that the Chinese were busy with civil war and not able yet to defend themselves, the Japanese invaded Manchuria and took it with very little trouble. It is an enormous territory, rich in farming land and minerals ; it had belonged to China ever since the beginning of the Manchu Dynasty, in 1644. After that they moved into the north of China. The Chinese did very little to prevent this ; partly because they knew that they were not strong enough to fight Japan ; partly because Chiang Kai-shek was already at war with the Communists and using his best armies against them. He could not fight two wars at once ; he believed that China must be united before it could fight another nation and he hoped all the time that the Communists would surrender to him. They did not surrender, however ; and so, for four or five years he went on fighting them, while the Japanese did what they liked in the northern provinces and ordered the government about as if they were its masters.

Many people did not like this at all. Some of Chiang's generals turned against him. The Communists, ever since they had marched into the northwest, had wanted to fight Japan. "Let us fight together," they said, "against the enemy that is trying to conquer us both ! Let us have a government made up of all political parties, not just one ! Let all of our soldiers form one army and we shall soon drive the invaders out !" You can imagine how the students felt about it, for they had distrusted Japan from the first. They began to march again

through the streets of Peiping, carrying their banners shouting, "Unite, China !" "Let us fight for our freedom !" "Why are we fighting our brothers and not fighting our enemies ?" In perfect order, in bitter winter weather, they marched into the cities and through the cities ; other people joined them, as they had done years before, and a patriotic spirit rose all over the country. Some students marched to Nanking and Chiang himself had to listen to them. What would he do ? The problem was settled in an astonishing way.

In 1936 Chiang sent one of his armies into the northwest against the Communists, but nothing seemed to happen, so in December he flew up to Shensi to see what was wrong. There he found that his soldiers were talking to the Communist soldiers and that both sides wanted to stop killing each other and to drive the Japanese out of China and Manchuria. Chiang talked with his generals and they begged him to do what the soldiers wanted. He refused, for he has a very strong will and he believed that he was doing what was best for his country. So his own general arrested him and kept him a prisoner until he was persuaded that his soldiers were right. The Communist leaders also came and talked to him. They had this man, who had fought so long and bitterly against them, in their power ; but they told him that they would gladly follow him as their leader if he would only turn all his forces against Japan and if he would set up a truly democratic government made up of all the political parties.

Chiang was too proud to agree to anything while he was held a prisoner, but when he was released and allowed to fly back to Nanking, he did everything that he had been asked to do. He stopped the civil war and he called a meeting of all political parties for the next November to set up a government for the whole of China.

The meeting was never held. The Japanese, seeing that China was united, realized that if they were ever to conquer it, they must strike soon. Their armies were already in northern China ; on July 7, 1937, they picked a quarrel with some Chinese soldiers near Peiping and started the war. In a short time they had taken possession of that great old city and the port of Tientsin. In Tientsin, one of the first things they did was to rain bombs and incendiaries on the schools and colleges there, destroying scientific laboratories and priceless libraries. This was their revenge upon the students who had stood so bravely against them. In Peiping they closed most educational buildings or used them as barracks for their soldiers. The day the war started is called "Double Seven" (the seventh day of the seventh month) ; it will be remembered as a day of sorrow.

The Japanese had a splendidly trained and equipped army, a great navy and a powerful air force. Besides, they had passenger and freight ships that could bring the supplies they needed from abroad. The Chinese had many men in their armies, well trained but not so well equipped with tanks and artillery as the Japanese armies were ; they had a very small air force and hardly any navy at all. They had to rely mainly on foreign ships to bring them all the things they needed for modern warfare.

After taking Peiping, the Japanese struck at Shanghai. Leaving the foreign parts of it alone, their airplanes poured bombs on the Chinese city until it was a heap of stones and dust. Hundreds of thousands of people were killed or left homeless and starving. Chiang sent his armies there ; they fought magnificently for three months, but then, because they had not the ammunition, planes and tanks that their enemy had, they had to retreat. The Japanese took Shanghai in November, 1937, and they took Nanking in December.

Wherever they went they fought the way the Mongols had fought seven hundred years before, with unbelievable cruelty and brutality. It is not surprising that uncivilized Mongols hundreds of years ago, should fight that way ; it is shocking when civilized people do it now. All through the thickly populated eastern plains, cities and villages were smashed to pieces with bombs : every city that was taken was looted and whatever the Japanese did not want was destroyed. The people were brutally killed unless they were useful to the invading armies ; women and children and even babies were as mercilessly slaughtered as if they had been fighting men. From the north and from the east the Japanese pressed westward into China, destroying, torturing, killing as they went. Millions of people were killed or died of wounds or illness or starvation ; millions more picked up a few belongings, carried their babies and little children and fled into the west before the savage armies.

The Chinese armies, retreating step by step, stood firm in the spring of 1938 and beat the Japanese in a great battle. A thrill of hope went through China. Chiang and the other army leaders knew that they needed time to train more men, to get and make more ammunition, more airplanes, guns, and tanks. As they put it, they "traded space for time" ; that is, they let the Japanese take about a third of China while they, themselves, grew stronger and saved their armies as much as possible. After Nanking was taken, the government moved to Chungking, an old city in Szechuan, built on a great rock that rises steeply up between the Yangtze and the Chialing Rivers. Day after day, year after year, Japanese planes dropped their bombs on Chungking, but the people cut shelters deep into the rock, where they were safe ; when the raids were over, they came out and built their houses up again.

The people hoped that other countries would help them, but in this they were bitterly disappointed. To be sure, Americans and Europeans sold supplies to them, but they sold far more to Japan, especially the Americans, who sent to Japan most of the gasoline and iron that it needed for the war. In 1938, the Japanese took the great southern port, Canton, and then blockaded the whole coast, so that no ships could get into China. Russia sent what it could, slowly, over the old caravan routes ; in the midst of the war, the Chinese built a road into Burma, over the steep mountains, through the jungles, across the wild rivers of that little-known part of the world, so that they could get supplies, by truck, from seaports on the Indian Ocean. Only a small part of what they needed could reach them, very slowly, by these routes. But they never thought of surrendering.

The world was horrified at the savagery and selfishness of the Japanese ; it was amazed at the heroism of the Chinese. In all the horrible wars of our time, no people have suffered more than they or fought more bravely for their freedom. Even in the provinces that were conquered and occupied by the Japanese, the people did not give up. Small bands of farmers or students or men who had fled from the cities went into the hills, where they could hide, and became "guerrillas"; that is, they fought little battles of their own, apart from the regular army. They derailed or blew up ammunition or supply trains ; they blocked roads, destroyed bridges, cut telegraph wires, waylaid trucks that were carrying soldiers or supplies from one place to another, until the Japanese soldier had no rest in the territory he thought he had conquered.

Soon after the fall of Peiping some students escaped from the city, carrying with them a few pistols and rifles. They needed

more. Nearby was a Japanese prison ; they went to it at night, marching heavily like soldiers. One of them shouted in Japanese, "This is a Japanese patrol. Let us in at once!" The guards opened the gates ; the students overpowered them and the warden, freed the prisoners and went back to the hills well-armed and with many new recruits for their guerrilla band.

Women and children worked and fought with the men. Women sent food and clothing to them and nursed them when they were wounded ; girls fought and died with them. One time the Japanese took a village, robbing, killing and ill-treating the villagers as they always did. A group of them entered a house for the night and ordered a boy to serve their supper. He did this, but when the meal was over he stole out, got five other boys, collected hoes, an ax and a butcher's knife and, when the Japanese were asleep, returned and killed them all. The boys escaped and joined the guerrillas. The children of China have had a bitter childhood ; again and again they have done the work of men and women.

The Communists were particularly good at this sort of war. They were in the north and northwest, where it was hard for them to get anything at all that they needed, but they kept up a continual warfare, capturing arms and ammunition from their enemies and keeping them out of important territory.

Since the Japanese wanted to use China for their own profit and convenience, they did not want its people to be educated to think for themselves or to work for themselves. So everywhere they went they closed the schools and colleges that had been built with so much hope and such high purpose ; they burned the libraries and the laboratories. If they could use factories, they kept them ; otherwise they blew them up. Much of the fine work done by the Kuo Min Tang was lost ; much of

it was taken over and used by the enemy. But the people never lost hope and courage.

School after school, college after college picked up its books and moved into the west, into what was called Free China. Boys and girls, men and women, carrying books and whatever else they could, walked hundreds of miles and set up their schools in safe places. In the loess country of the northwest teachers and students dug caves in the soft earth, as the people have done for thousands of years, and lived and studied there. Factories, too, were moved for hundreds of miles, each piece of machinery carried on muleback, in carts or on men's shoulders, over mountains and rivers, and set up again in a new building.

Because supplies were so hard to get from abroad, little factories and workshops were started all over Free China by small groups of people. They were called cooperatives, because the people themselves own and work them together. These cooperatives made many of the things that the army and the people needed so desperately : cloth and blankets, medicines and bandages, paper and ink, tools and shoes.

So, year after year, the Chinese held out. They were not able to drive their enemies out of the country, but neither did they let them conquer it. After 1938, when the Japanese had swept through the north and east, taking the seacoast and most of the valuable and fertile parts of the land, they did not conquer much more. China was just too big and had too many people in it for a smaller nation to conquer. The Chinese, who are always ready to laugh, even in the worst misfortunes, laughed at their enemy. "This country of ours," they said, "is like the ocean and the Japanese are like fish. They can swim about in it all they like, but no one can say that the fish own the ocean." "They can never beat us," said an old farmer who had fought for years in a guerrilla band. "Did you ever see a mouse eat

up a buffalo ?” And they quoted an old proverb : “When a man goes for a ride on a tiger’s back, he may not find it easy to get off again.”

In 1939 World War II began in Europe and again the Japanese thought that this was a good time for them to conquer the rich lands beyond China that belonged to the European nations. They sent troops into Indo-China, for they knew that the French could not defend it. But the United States had not yet entered the war and it objected to what Japan was doing. The Japanese, who had never been defeated in war and who thought themselves strong enough to conquer the whole world, answered by attacking Pearl Harbor, in Hawaii, where the Pacific Fleet of the United States was stationed. This was on December 7, 1941. The next day, both the United States and Great Britain declared war on Japan.

When this happened, the Chinese were filled with hope. Here at last were two powerful nations, with strong armies, navies and air forces, to fight with them against the enemy ! But again they were bitterly disappointed. The eastern coast of Asia is a long way off from America and England and it takes a long time to move great armies and navies so far. The Chinese, with amazement and dismay, saw the Philippines and Singapore, Malaya and Burma and then all the East Indies conquered by Japan. The ports at the end of the Burma road were also taken, so that it could no longer be used. The war had now spread all over the world ; England and America decided that they would have to defeat Germany first in Europe before they could turn their whole strength against Japan. So China had to wait another three and a half years, hard and bitter years, for now almost nothing could reach them from the outside and the Japanese still held the most valuable part of their country. They tightened their belts and waited.

Although the American army was sent to Europe, the American navy began at once to fight in the Pacific, and within half a year's time was meeting and defeating the Japanese fleet. In battle after battle, it made its way over the immense distances of that widest of oceans. Island after island was taken by American Marines at the cost of many lives and great suffering. In the Indies British and Americans fought together under the command of General MacArthur. Little by little, during three years, thousands of miles of land and water were won back from Japan. Early in 1945 the Philippines were freed ; American airplanes were now so close to Japan that they could bomb Japanese cities as Chinese cities had been bombed years before.

In the summer of 1945, in the United States, the atomic bomb was invented, a far more terrible weapon than any that had ever been used before. American planes dropped these bombs on two Japanese cities ; the cities and most of the people in them were wiped out. No country could stand such destruction as this. Therefore in August of that year, sooner than anyone had dared to hope, the Japanese surrendered. All their armies, spread over China and Manchuria, Malaya and Burma, Indo-China and the Indies, laid down their arms. In September, in Nanking, which had been taken so brutally eight years before, the Japanese commander surrendered his army of over a million men to the Chinese. The long war was over.



In its long history, China has gone through times like this before. Millions of people have been killed when dynasties fell, in rebellions like the Tai Ping, and when the Mongols

came. If you know its history, you will believe that it will recover from this terrible war and be stronger than ever ; that, because of its contact with the West, hard as this has been, its civilization will grow and develop and be finer than it has ever been.

There is a mighty work ahead for the followers of Sun Yat-sen to do. The war-stricken country will have to be built up again and the revolution achieved. Since 1911 there have been four years under Yuan Shi-kai, twenty years of civil wars and eight heartbreaking years of war against Japan. There has not been time to teach the people how to have Democracy ; for the last twenty years the Kuo Min Tang has been the only government. There has not been time to plan for the People's Livelihood and the war has made China desperately poor. But the first of the Three Principles of the People, Nationalism, has been largely won. The country was united by suffering and labor and the unceasing fight for freedom. It has won the respect and admiration of the world. On "Double Ten Day," 1942, the United States and Great Britain told China that they would tear up the old treaties that allowed them to keep their soldiers, their gunboats and their courts in China. New treaties were signed early in 1943 and China rejoiced, for it was now the equal of the other great nations.

After the second dreadful World War, which had brought death and suffering to so many millions of people, the countries that had defeated Germany and Japan organized themselves so that they could meet and plan together to prevent other wars from happening. They call their organization the United Nations. The most important part of it is a Security Council made up of eleven countries. Six of these are elected and are members of the Council for only two years at a time, but five of them will always be members of the Council, because they

are thought to be the most important nations in the world at this time. China is one of the five.

It is fortunate that this is so, for the world needs many things that China has to give. The Chinese have had such a long history that they are not discouraged by misfortune ; because they can look far back they can also look far ahead. They have wisdom and patience. They truly love peace and despise war ; they have never conquered other people ; they desire only friendship with their neighbors. They believe, above all things, in right relationships and right behavior ; and, more than anything else, the world now needs right relations and right behavior between nations and races. The vision and experience of China will surely help all the peoples of the earth to recognize each other as brothers, and to live and work together as a family should.

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